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PORTRAIT OF POE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-FIVE. THIS APPEARED IN "GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE," FEBRUARY, 1845, ENGRAVED ON STEEL FROM A PAINTING BY A. C. SMITH.

THE WORKS

OF

EDGAR ALLAN POE

NEWLY COLLECTED AND EDITED, WITH A MEMOIR, CRITICAL INTRODUCTIONS, AND NOTES, BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN AND GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

THE ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ALBERT EDWARD STERNER

IN TEN VOLUMES
VOLUME VII

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PORTRAIT OF POE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-FIVE. THIS APPEARED IN "GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE," FEBRUARY, 1845, ENGRAVED ON STEEL FROM A PAINTING BY A. C. SMITH *Frontispiece*

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I

ON NOVELS, ESSAYS, AND TRAVELS

ON NOVELS, ESSAYS, AND TRAVELS

COOPER'S "WYANDOTTÉ"

"WYANDOTTÉ, or The Hutted Knoll," is, in its general features, precisely similar to the novels enumerated in the title. It is a forest subject; and, when we say this, we give assurance that the story is a good one; for Mr. Cooper has never been known to fail, either in the forest or upon the sea. The interest, as usual, has no reference to plot, of which, indeed, our novelist seems altogether regardless, or incapable, but depends, first, upon the nature of the theme; secondly, upon a Robinson-Crusoe-like detail in its management; and, thirdly, upon the frequently repeated portraiture of the half-civilized Indian. In saying that the interest depends, *first*, upon the nature of the theme, we mean to suggest that this theme — life in the wilderness — is one of intrinsic and universal interest, appealing to the heart of man in all phases; a theme, like that of life upon the ocean, so unfailingly omniprevalent in its power of arresting and absorbing attention that, while success or popularity is, with such a subject, expected as a matter of course, a failure might be properly regarded as conclusive evidence of imbecility on the part of the author. The two theses in question have been handled *usque*

ad nauseam — and this through the instinctive perception of the universal interest which appertains to them. A writer, distrustful of his powers, can scarcely do better than discuss either one or the other. A man of genius will rarely, and should never, undertake either: first, because both are excessively hackneyed; and, secondly, because the reader never fails, in forming his opinion of a book, to make discount, either wittingly or unwittingly, for that intrinsic interest which is inseparable from the subject and independent of the manner in which it is treated. Very few, and very dull, indeed, are those who do not instantaneously perceive the distinction; and thus there are two great classes of fictions: a popular and widely circulated class, read with pleasure but without admiration, in which the author is lost or forgotten, or remembered, if at all, with something very nearly akin to contempt; and then, a class not so popular nor so widely diffused, in which at every paragraph arises a distinctive and highly pleasurable interest, springing from our perception and appreciation of the skill employed or the genius evinced in the composition. After perusal of the one class, we think solely of the book; after reading the other, chiefly of the author. The former class leads to popularity; the latter to fame. In the former case, the books sometimes live, while the authors usually die; in the latter, even when the works perish, the man survives. Among American writers of the less generally circulated, but more worthy and more artistical fictions, we may mention Mr. Brockden Brown, Mr. John Neal, Mr. Simms, Mr. Hawthorne; at the head of the more popular division we may place Mr. Cooper.

"The Hutted Knoll," without pretending to detail

facts, gives a narrative of fictitious events, similar, in nearly all respects, to occurrences which actually happened during the opening scenes of the Revolution, and at other epochs of our history. It pictures the dangers, difficulties, and distresses of a large family, living, completely insulated, in the forest. The tale commences with a description of the "region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson, extending as far south as the line of Pennsylvania, and west to the verge of that vast rolling plain which composes Western New York" — a region of which the novelist has already frequently written, and the whole of which, with a trivial exception, was a wilderness before the Revolution. Within this district, and on a creek running into the Unadilla, a certain Captain Willoughby purchases an estate or "patent," and there retires, with his family and dependents, to pass the close of his life in agricultural pursuits. He has been an officer in the British army, but, after serving many years, has sold his commission, and purchased one for his only son, Robert, who alone does not accompany the party into the forest. This party consists of the captain himself; his wife; his daughter, Beulah; an adopted daughter, Maud Meredith; an invalid sergeant, Joyce, who had served under the captain; a Presbyterian preacher, Mr. Woods; a Scotch mason, Jamie Allen; an Irish laborer, Michael O'Hearn; a Connecticut man, Joel Strides; four negroes, old Plin and young Plin, Big Smash and Little Smash; eight axe-men; a house-carpenter; a millwright, etc., etc. Besides these, a Tuscarora Indian called Nick, or *Wyandotté*, accompanies the expedition. This Indian, who figures largely in the story, and gives it its title, may be con-

sidered as the principal character — the one chiefly elaborated. He is an outcast from his tribe, has been known to Captain Willoughby for thirty years, and is a compound of all the good and bad qualities which make up the character of the half-civilized Indian. He does not remain with the settlers; but appears and reappears at intervals upon the scene.

Nearly the whole of the first volume is occupied with a detailed account of the estate purchased (which is termed "The Hutted Knoll," from a natural mound upon which the principal house is built), and of the progressive arrangements and improvements. Toward the close of the volume the Revolution commences; and the party at the "Knoll" are besieged by a band of savages and "rebels," with whom an understanding exists, on the part of Joel Strides, the Yankee. This traitor, instigated by the hope of possessing Captain Willoughby's estate, should it be confiscated, brings about a series of defections from the party of the settlers, and finally, deserting himself, reduces the whole number to six or seven, capable of bearing arms. Captain Willoughby resolves, however, to defend his post. His son, at this juncture, pays him a clandestine visit, and, endeavoring to reconnoitre the position of the Indians, is made captive. The Captain, in an attempt at rescue, is murdered by Wyandotté, whose vindictive passions had been aroused by ill-timed allusions on the part of Willoughby to floggings previously inflicted by his orders upon the Indian. Wyandotté, however, having satisfied his personal vengeance, is still the ally of the settlers. He guides Maud, who is beloved by Robert, to the hut in which the latter is confined, and effects his escape. Aroused by this escape, the Indians pre-

cipitate their attack upon the Knoll, which, through the previous treachery of Strides in ill-hanging a gate, is immediately carried. Mrs. Willoughby, Beulah, and others of the party are killed. Maud is secreted, and thus saved, by Wyandotté. At the last moment, when all is apparently lost, a reinforcement appears, under command of Evert Beekman, the husband of Beulah; and the completion of the massacre is prevented. Woods, the preacher, had left the knoll, and made his way through the enemy, to inform Beekman of the dilemma of his friends. Maud and Robert Willoughby are, of course, happily married. The concluding scene of the novel shows us Wyandotté repenting the murder of Willoughby and converted to Christianity through the agency of Woods.

It will be at once seen that there is nothing original in this story. On the contrary, it is even excessively commonplace. The lover, for example, rescued from captivity by the mistress; the Knoll carried through the treachery of an inmate; and the salvation of the besieged, at the very last moment, by a reinforcement arriving, in consequence of a message borne to a friend by one of the besieged, without the cognizance of the others; these, we say, are incidents which have been the common property of every novelist since the invention of letters. And as for plot, there has been no attempt at anything of the kind. The tale is a mere succession of events, scarcely any one of which has any necessary dependence upon any one other. Plot, however, is at best an artificial effect, requiring, like music, not only a natural bias, but long cultivation of taste for its full appreciation; some of the finest narratives in the world — "Gil-Blas" and "Robinson Crusoe," for example — have been written

without its employment; and "The Hutted Knoll," like all the sea and forest novels of Cooper, has been made deeply interesting, although depending upon this peculiar source of interest not at all. Thus the absence of plot can never be critically regarded as a defect; although its judicious use, in all cases aiding and in no case injuring other effects, must be regarded as of a very high order of merit.

There are one or two points, however, in the mere conduct of the story now before us, which may, perhaps, be considered as defective. For instance, there is too much obviousness in all that appertains to the hanging of the large gate. In more than a dozen instances, Mrs. Willoughby is made to allude to the delay in the hanging; so that the reader is too positively and pointedly forced to perceive that this delay is to result in the capture of the Knoll. As we are never in doubt of the fact, we feel diminished interest when it actually happens. A single vague allusion, well managed, would have been in the true artistical spirit.

Again: we see too plainly, from the first, that Beekman is to marry Beulah, and that Robert Willoughby is to marry Maud. The killing of Beulah, of Mrs. Willoughby, and Jamie Allen, produces, too, a painful impression, which does not properly appertain to the right fiction. Their deaths affect us as revolting and supererogatory; since the purposes of the story are not thereby furthered in any regard. To Willoughby's murder, however distressing, the reader makes no similar objection; merely because in his decease is fulfilled a species of poetical justice. We may observe here, nevertheless, that his repeated references to his flogging the Indian seem unnatural,

because we have otherwise no reason to think him a fool or a madman, and these references under the circumstances are absolutely insensate. We object, also, to the manner in which the general interest is dragged out or suspended. The besieging party are kept before the Knoll so long, while so little is done and so many opportunities of action are lost, that the reader takes it for granted that nothing of consequence will occur — that the besieged will be finally delivered. He gets so accustomed to the presence of danger that its excitement at length departs. The action is not sufficiently rapid. There is too much procrastination. There is too much mere talk for talk's sake. The interminable discussions between Woods and Captain Willoughby are, perhaps, the worst feature of the book, for they have not even the merit of referring to the matters on hand. In general, there is quite too much colloquy for the purpose of manifesting character, and too little for the explanation of motive. The characters of the drama would have been better made out by action; while the motives to action, the reasons for the different courses of conduct adopted by the *dramatis personæ*, might have been made to proceed more satisfactorily from their own mouths in casual conversations than from that of the author in person. To conclude our remarks upon the head of ill-conduct in the story, we may mention occasional incidents of the merest melodramatic absurdity; as, for example, at page 156, of the second volume, where "Willoughby had an arm round the waist of Maud, and bore her forward with a rapidity to which her own strength was entirely unequal." We may be permitted to doubt whether a young lady, of sound health and limbs, exists, within the limits of Christendom, who

could not run faster, on her own proper feet, for any considerable distance, than she could be carried upon *one arm* of either the Cretan Milo or of the Hercules Farnese.

On the other hand, it would be easy to designate many particulars which are admirably handled. The love of Maud Meredith for Robert Willoughby is painted with exquisite skill and truth. The incident of the tress of hair and box is naturally and effectively conceived. A fine collateral interest is thrown over the whole narrative by the connection of the theme with that of the Revolution; and, especially, there is an excellent dramatic point, at page 124 of the second volume, where Wyandotté, remembering the stripes inflicted upon him by Captain Willoughby, is about to betray him to his foes, when his purpose is arrested by a casual glimpse, through the forest, of the hut which contains Mrs. Willoughby, who had preserved the life of the Indian by inoculation for the small-pox.

In the depicting of character, Mr. Cooper has been unusually successful in "Wyandotté." One or two of his personages, to be sure, must be regarded as little worth. Robert Willoughby, like most novel heroes, is a nobody; that is to say, there is nothing about him which may be looked upon as distinctive. Perhaps he is rather silly than otherwise; as, for instance, when he confuses all his father's arrangements for his concealment, and bursts into the room before Strides — afterward insisting upon accompanying that person to the Indian encampment, without any possible or impossible object. Woods, the parson, is a sad bore, upon the Dominie Sampson plan, and is, moreover, caricatured. Of Captain Willoughby we have already spoken — he is too often on stilts. Evert Beekman

and Beulah are merely episodical. Joyce is nothing in the world but Corporal Trim — or, rather, Corporal Trim and water. Jamie Allen, with his prate about Catholicism, is insufferable. But Mrs. Willoughby, the humble, shrinking, womanly wife, whose whole existence centres in her affections, is worthy of Mr. Cooper. Maud Meredith is still better. In fact, we know no female portraiture, even in Scott, which surpasses her; and yet the world has been given to understand, by the enemies of the novelist, that he is incapable of depicting a woman. Joel Strides will be recognized by all who are conversant with his general prototypes of Connecticut. Michael O'Hearn, the County Leitrim man, is an Irishman all over, and his portraiture abounds in humor; as, for example, at page 31, of the first volume, where he has a difficulty with a skiff, not being able to account for its revolving upon its own axis, instead of moving forward! or, at page 132, where, during divine service, to exclude at least a portion of the heretical doctrine, he stops *one* of his ears with his thumb; or, at page 195, where a passage occurs so much to our purpose that we will be pardoned for quoting it in full. Captain Willoughby is drawing his son up through a window, from his enemies below. The assistants, placed at a distance from this window to avoid observation from without, are ignorant of what burden is at the end of the rope: —

"The men did as ordered, raising their load from the ground a foot or two at a time. In this manner the burden approached, yard after yard, until it was evidently drawing near the window.

"'It 's the captain hoisting up the big baste of a hog, for provisioning the hoose again a saige,' whispered Mike to

the negroes, who grinned as they tugged; 'and when the craitur squails, see to it that ye do not squail yourselves.' At that moment the head and shoulders of a man appeared at the window. Mike let go the rope, seized a chair, and was about to knock the intruder upon the head; but the captain arrested the blow.

"'It 's one o' the vagabone Injins that has undermined the hog and come up in its stead,' roared Mike.

"'It 's my son,' said the captain; 'see that you are silent and secret.'"

The negroes are, without exception, admirably drawn. The Indian, Wyandotté, however, is the great feature of the book, and is, in every respect, equal to the previous Indian creations of the author of "The Pioneer." Indeed, we think this "forest gentleman" superior to the other noted heroes of his kind — the heroes which have been immortalized by our novelist. His keen sense of the distinction, in his own character, between the chief, Wyandotté, and the drunken vagabond, Sassy Nick; his chivalrous delicacy toward Maud, in never disclosing to her that knowledge of her real feelings toward Robert Willoughby which his own Indian intuition had discovered; his enduring animosity toward Captain Willoughby, softened, and for thirty years delayed, through his gratitude to the wife; and then, the vengeance consummated, his pity for that wife conflicting with his exultation at the deed — these, we say, are all traits of a lofty excellence indeed. Perhaps the most effective passage in the book, and that which most distinctively brings out the character of the Tuscarora, is to be found at pages 50, 51, 52, and 53 of the second volume, where, for some trivial misdemeanor, the captain threatens to make use of the whip. The manner

in which the Indian *harps* upon the threat, returning to it again and again, in every variety of phrase, forms one of the finest pieces of mere character-painting with which we have any acquaintance.

The most obvious and most unaccountable faults of "The Hutted Knoll" are those which appertain to the *style*, to the mere grammatical construction; for, in other and more important particulars of style, Mr. Cooper, of late days, has made a very manifest improvement. His sentences, however, are arranged with an awkwardness so remarkable as to be matter of absolute astonishment, when we consider the education of the author and his long and continual practice with the pen. In minute descriptions of localities, any verbal inaccuracy or confusion becomes a source of vexation and misunderstanding, detracting very much from the pleasure of perusal; and in these inaccuracies "Wyandotté" abounds. Although, for instance, we carefully read and re-read that portion of the narrative which details the situation of the Knoll and the construction of the buildings and walls about it, we were forced to proceed with the story without any exact or definite impressions upon the subject. Similar difficulties from similar causes occur *passim* throughout the book. For example, at page 41, vol. i.:

"The Indian gazed at the house, with that fierce intentness which sometimes glared, in a manner that had got to be, in its ordinary aspects, dull and besotted." This it is utterly impossible to comprehend. We presume, however, the intention is to say that although the Indian's ordinary manner (of gazing) had "got to be" dull and besotted, he occasionally gazed with an intentness that glared, and that he did

so in the instance in question. The "got to be" is atrocious — the whole sentence no less so.

Here at page 9, vol. i., is something excessively vague: "Of the latter character is the face of most of that region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson," etc., etc. The Mohawk, joining the Hudson, forms *two* angles, of course, an acute and an obtuse one; and, without farther explanation, it is difficult to say which is intended.

At page 55, vol. i., we read: — "The captain, owing to his English education, had avoided straight lines, and formal paths; giving to the little spot the improvement on nature which is a consequence of embellishing her works without destroying them. On each side of this lawn was an orchard, thrifty and young, and which *were* already beginning to show signs of putting forth their blossoms." Here we are tautologically informed that improvement is a consequence of embellishment, and supererogatorily told that the rule holds good only where the embellishment is not accompanied by destruction. Upon the "each orchard *were*" it is needless to comment.

At page 30, vol. i., is something similar, where Strides is represented as "never doing anything that required a particle more than the exertion and strength that were absolutely necessary to effect his object." Did Mr. Cooper ever hear of any labor that *required* more exertion than was *necessary?* He means to say that Strides exerted himself no farther than was necessary — that's all.

At page 59, vol. i., we find this sentence — "He was advancing by the only road that was ever travelled by the stranger as he approached the Hut; or, he came up the valley." This is merely a vagueness

of speech. "Or" is intended to imply "that is to say." The whole would be clearer thus — "He was advancing by the valley — the only road travelled by a stranger approaching the Hut." We have here sixteen words, instead of Mr. Cooper's twenty-five.

At page 8, vol. ii., is an unpardonable awkwardness, although an awkwardness strictly grammatical. "I was a favorite, I believe, with, certainly was much petted by, both." Upon this we need make no farther observation. It speaks for itself.

We are aware, however, that there is a certain air of unfairness, in thus quoting detached passages for animadversion of this kind; for, however strictly at random our quotations may really be, we have, of course, no means of proving the fact to our readers; and there are *no* authors, from whose works individual inaccurate sentences may not be culled. But we mean to say that Mr. Cooper, no doubt through haste or neglect, is *remarkably* and *especially* inaccurate, as a general rule; and, by way of demonstrating this assertion, we will dismiss our extracts at random, and discuss some entire page of his composition. More than this: we will endeavor to select that particular page upon which it might naturally be supposed he would bestow the most careful attention. The reader will say at once — "Let this be his *first* page — the first page of his Preface." This page, then, shall be taken of course.

"The history of the borders is filled with legends of the sufferings of isolated families, during the troubled scenes of colonial warfare. Those which we now offer to the reader are distinctive in many of their leading facts, if not rigidly true in the details. The first alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction."

"*Abounds* with legends," would be better than "is filled with legends;" for it is clear that if the history were *filled* with legends, it would be all legend and no history. The word "of," too, occurs, in the first sentence, with an unpleasant frequency. The "those" commencing the second sentence, grammatically refers to the noun "scenes," immediately preceding, but is intended for "legends." The adjective "distinctive" is vaguely and altogether improperly employed. Mr. Cooper, we believe, means to say, merely, that, although the details of his legends may not be strictly true, facts similar to his leading ones have actually occurred. By use of the word "distinctive," however, he has contrived to convey a meaning nearly converse. In saying that his legend is "distinctive" in many of the leading facts, he has said what he, clearly, did not wish to say, viz.: that his legend contained facts which distinguished it from all other legends — in other words, facts never before discussed in other legends and belonging peculiarly to his own. That Mr. Cooper *did* mean what we suppose, is rendered evident by the third sentence — "The first alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction." This third sentence itself, however, is very badly constructed. "The first" can refer, grammatically, only to "facts;" but no such reference is intended. If we ask the question — what is meant by "the first?" — *what* "alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction?" — the natural reply is "that facts similar to the leading ones have actually happened." This circumstance is alone to be cared for — this consideration "alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction."

"One of the misfortunes of a nation is to hear nothing besides its own praises." This is the fourth sen-

tence, and is by no means lucid. The design is to say that individuals composing a nation, and living altogether within the national bounds, hear from each other only praises of the nation, and that this is a misfortune to the individuals, since it misleads them in regard to the actual condition of the nation. Here it will be seen that, to convey the intended idea, we have been forced to make distinction between the nation and its individual members; for it is evident that a nation is considered as such only in reference to other nations; and thus *as a nation*, it hears *very* much "besides its own praises;" that is to say, it hears the detractions of other rival nations. In endeavoring to compel his meaning within the compass of a brief sentence, Mr. Cooper has completely sacrificed its intelligibility.

The fifth sentence runs thus: — "Although the American Revolution was probably as just an effort as was ever made by a people to resist the first inroads of oppression, the cause had its evil aspects, as well as all other human struggles."

The American Revolution is here improperly called an "effort." The effort was the cause, of which the Revolution was the result. A rebellion is an "effort" to effect a revolution. An "inroad of oppression" involves an untrue metaphor; for "inroad" appertains to aggression, to attack, to active assault. "The cause had its evil aspects as well as all other human struggles," implies that the cause had not only its evil aspects, but had, also, all other human struggles. If the words must be retained at all, they should be thus arranged — "The cause like [or as well as] all other human struggles, had its evil aspects;" or better thus

— "The cause had its evil aspect, as have all human struggles." "Other" is superfluous.

The sixth sentence is thus written; — "We have been so much accustomed to hear everything extolled, of late years, that could be dragged into the remotest connection with that great event, and the principles which led to it, that there is danger of overlooking truth in a pseudo-patriotism." The "of late years," here, should follow the "accustomed," or precede the "We have been;" and the Greek "pseudo" is objectionable, since its exact equivalent is to be found in the English "false." "Spurious" would be better, perhaps, than either.

Inadvertences such as these sadly disfigure the style of "The Hutted Knoll;" and every true friend of its author must regret his inattention to the minor morals of the Muse. But these "minor morals," it may be said, are trifles at best. Perhaps so. At all events, we should never have thought of dwelling so pertinaciously upon the unessential demerits of "Wyandotté," could we have discovered any more momentous upon which to comment.

HAWTHORNE'S "TALES"

I

THE reputation of the author of "Twice-Told Tales" has been confined, until very lately, to literary society; and I have not been wrong, perhaps, in citing him as *the* example, *par excellence*, in this country, of the privately-admired and publicly-unappreciated man of genius. Within the last year or two, it is true, an occasional critic has been urged, by honest indignation, into very warm approval. Mr. Webber, for instance (than whom no one has a keener relish for that kind of writing which Mr. Hawthorne has best illustrated), gave us, in a late number of the "American Review," a cordial and certainly a full tribute to his talents; and since the issue of the "Mosses from an Old Manse" criticisms of similar tone have been by no means infrequent in our more authoritative journals. I can call to mind few reviews of Hawthorne published *before* the "Mosses." One I remember in "Arcturus" (edited by Mathews and Duyckinck) for May, 1841; another in the "American Monthly" (edited by Hoffman and Herbert) for March, 1838; a third in the ninety-sixth number of the "North American Review." These criticisms, however, seemed to have little effect on the popular taste; at least, if we are to form any idea of the popular taste by reference to its expression in the news-

papers, or by the sale of the author's book. It was never the fashion (until lately) to speak of him in any summary of our best authors.

The daily critics would say, on such occasions, "Is there not Irving and Cooper, and Bryant, and Paulding, and — Smith?" or, "Have we not Halleck and Dana, and Longfellow, and — Thompson?" or, "Can we not point triumphantly to our own Sprague, Willis, Channing, Bancroft, Prescott and — Jenkins?" but these unanswerable queries were never wound up by the name of Hawthorne.

Beyond doubt, this inappreciation of him on the part of the public arose chiefly from the two causes to which I have referred — from the facts that he is neither a man of wealth nor a quack; but these are insufficient to account for the whole effect. No small portion of it is attributable to the very marked idiosyncrasy of Mr. Hawthorne himself. In one sense, and in great measure, to be peculiar is to be original, and than the true originality there is no higher literary virtue. This true or commendable originality, however, implies not the uniform, but the continuous peculiarity — a peculiarity springing from ever-active vigor of fancy — better still if from ever-present force of imagination, giving its own hue, its own character, to everything it touches, and, especially, *self-impelled to touch everything.*

It is often said, inconsiderately, that very original writers always fail in popularity, that such and such persons are too original to be comprehended by the mass. "Too peculiar," should be the phrase, "too idiosyncratic." It is, in fact, the excitable, undisciplined, and child-like popular mind which most keenly feels the original.

The criticism of the conservatives, of the hackneys, of the cultivated old clergymen of the "North American Review," is precisely the criticism which condemns, and alone condemns it. "It becometh not a divine," saith Lord Coke, "to be of a fiery and salamandrine spirit." Their conscience allowing them to move nothing themselves, these dignitaries have a holy horror of being moved. "Give us *quietude*," they say. Opening their mouths with proper caution, they sigh forth the word "*Repose*." And this is, indeed, the one thing they should be permitted to enjoy, if only upon the Christian principle of give and take.

The fact is, that if Mr. Hawthorne were really original, he could not fail of making himself felt by the public. But the fact is, he is not original in any sense. Those who speak of him as original mean nothing more than that he differs in his manner or tone, and in his choice of subjects, from any author of their acquaintance — their acquaintance not extending to the German Tieck, whose manner, in *some* of his works, is absolutely identical with that *habitual* to Hawthorne. But it is clear that the element of the literary originality is novelty. The element of its appreciation by the reader is the reader's sense of the new. Whatever gives him a new, and, insomuch, a pleasurable emotion, he considers original; and whoever frequently gives him such emotion, he considers an original writer. In a word, it is by the sum total of these emotions that he decides upon the writer's claim to originality. I may observe here, however, that there is clearly a point at which even novelty itself would cease to produce the legitimate originality, if we judge this originality, as we should, by the effect designed; this point is that at which *novelty*

becomes nothing novel, and here the artist, *to preserve his originality*, will subside into the commonplace. No one, I think, has noticed that, merely through inattention to this matter, Moore has comparatively failed in his "Lalla Rookh." Few readers, and indeed few critics, have commended this poem for originality — and, in fact, the effect, originality, is not produced by it; yet no work of equal size so abounds in the happiest originalities, individually considered. They are so excessive as, in the end, to deaden in the reader all capacity for their appreciation.

These points properly understood, it will be seen that the critic (unacquainted with Tieck) who reads a single tale or essay by Hawthorne, may be justified in thinking him original; but the tone, or manner, or choice of subject, which induces in this critic the sense of the new, will — if not in a second tale, at least in a third and all subsequent ones — not only fail of inducing it, but bring about an exactly antagonistic impression. In concluding a volume, and more especially in concluding all the volumes of the author, the critic will abandon his first design of calling him "original," and content himself with styling him "peculiar."

With the vague opinion that to be original is to be unpopular, I could, indeed, agree, were I to adopt an understanding of originality which, to my surprise, I have known adopted by many who have a right to be called critical. They have limited, in a love for mere words, the literary to the metaphysical originality. They regard as original in letters only such combinations of thought, of incident, and so forth, as are, in fact, absolutely novel. It is clear, however, not only that it is the novelty of effect alone which is worth consideration, but that this effect is best wrought, for

the end of all fictitious composition, pleasure, by shunning rather than by seeking the absolute novelty of combination. Originality, thus understood, tasks and startles the intellect, and so brings into undue action the faculties to which, in the lighter literature, we least appeal. And thus understood, it cannot fail to prove unpopular with the masses, who, seeking in this literature amusement, are positively offended by instruction. But the true originality — true in respect of its purposes — is that which, in bringing out the half-formed, the reluctant, or the unexpressed fancies of mankind, or in exciting the more delicate pulses of the heart's passion, or in giving birth to some universal sentiment or instinct in embryo, thus combines with the pleasurable effect of *apparent* novelty a real egotistic delight. The reader, in the case first supposed (that of the absolute novelty), is excited, but embarrassed, disturbed, in some degree even pained, at his own want of perception, at his own folly in not having himself hit upon the idea. In the second case, his pleasure is doubled. He is filled with an intrinsic and extrinsic delight. He feels and intensely enjoys the seeming novelty of the thought, enjoys it as really novel, as absolutely original with the writer — *and* himself. They two, he fancies, have, alone of all men, thought thus. They two have, together, created this thing. Henceforward there is a bond of sympathy between them — a sympathy which irradiates every subsequent page of the book.

There is a species of writing which, with some difficulty, may be admitted as a lower degree of what I have called the true original. In its perusal, we say to ourselves, not "how original this is!" nor "here is an idea which I and the author have alone enter-

tained," but "here is a charmingly obvious fancy," or sometimes even, "here is a thought which I am not sure has ever occurred to myself, but which, of course, has occurred to all the rest of the world." This kind of composition (which still appertains to a high order) is usually designated as "the natural." It has little external resemblance, but strong internal affinity to the true original, if, indeed, as I have suggested, it is not of this latter an inferior degree. It is best exemplified, among English writers, in Addison, Irving, and *Hawthorne*. The "ease" which is so often spoken of as its distinguishing feature, it has been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone, as a point of really difficult attainment. This idea, however, must be received with some reservation. The natural style is difficult only to those who should never intermeddle with it — to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that the *tone*, in composition, should be that which, at any given point or upon any given topic, would be the tone of the great mass of humanity. The author who, after the manner of the "North Americans," is merely at *all* times *quiet*, is, of course, upon *most* occasions, merely silly or stupid, and has no more right to be thought "easy" or "natural" than has a cockney exquisite, or the sleeping beauty in the wax-works.

The "peculiarity," or sameness, or monotone of Hawthorne, would, in its mere character of "peculiarity," and without reference to what *is* the peculiarity, suffice to deprive him of all chance of popular appreciation. But at his failure to be appreciated, we can, of course, no longer wonder, when we find him monotonous at decidedly the worst of all possible points — at that point which, having the least concern with

Nature, is the farthest removed from the popular intellect, from the popular sentiment, and from the popular taste. I allude to the strain of allegory which completely overwhelms the greater number of his subjects, and which in some measure interferes with the direct conduct of absolutely all.

In defence of allegory (however or for whatever object employed) there is scarcely one respectable word to be said. Its best appeals are made to the fancy — that is to say, to our sense of adaptation, not of matters proper, but of matters improper for the purpose, of the real with the unreal; having never more of intelligible connection than has something with nothing, never half so much of effective affinity as has the substance for the shadow. The deepest emotion aroused within us by the happiest allegory, *as* allegory, is a very, very imperfectly satisfied sense of the writer's ingenuity in overcoming a difficulty we should have preferred his not having attempted to overcome. The fallacy of the idea that allegory, in any of its moods, can be made to enforce a truth, that metaphor, for example, may illustrate as well as embellish an argument, could be promptly demonstrated; the converse of the supposed fact might be shown, indeed, with very little trouble; but these are topics foreign to my present purpose. One thing is clear, that if allegory ever establishes a fact, it is by dint of overturning a fiction. Where the suggested meaning runs through the obvious one in a *very* profound under-current, so as never to interfere with the upper one without our own volition, so as never to show itself unless *called* to the surface, there only, for the proper uses of fictitious narrative, is it available at all. Under the best circumstances, it must always

interfere with that unity of effect which, to the artist, is worth all the allegory in the world. Its vital injury, however, is rendered to the most vitally important point in fiction — that of earnestness or verisimilitude. That "The Pilgrim's Progress" is a ludicrously overrated book, owing its seeming popularity to one or two of those accidents in critical literature which by the critical are sufficiently well understood, is a matter upon which no two thinking people disagree; but the pleasure derivable from it, in any sense, will be found in the direct ratio of the reader's capacity to smother its true purpose, in the direct ratio of his ability to keep the allegory out of sight, or of his *in*ability to comprehend it. Of allegory properly handled, judiciously subdued, seen only as a shadow or by suggestive glimpses, and making its nearest approach to truth in a not obtrusive and therefore not unpleasant *appositeness*, the "Undine" of De La Motte Fouqué is the best, and undoubtedly a very remarkable specimen.

The obvious causes, however, which have prevented Mr. Hawthorne's *popularity*, do not suffice to condemn him in the eyes of the few who belong properly to books, and to whom books, perhaps, do not quite so properly belong. These few estimate an author, not as do the public, altogether by what he does, but in great measure — indeed, even in the greatest measure — by what he evinces a capability of doing. In this view, Hawthorne stands among literary people in America much in the same light as did Coleridge in England. The few, also, through a certain warping of the taste, which long pondering upon books as books merely never fails to induce, are not in condition to view the errors of a scholar as errors altogether.

At any time these gentlemen are prone to think the public not right rather than an educated author wrong. But the simple truth is that the writer who aims at impressing the people is *always* wrong when he fails in forcing that people to receive the impression. How far Mr. Hawthorne has addressed the people at all, is, of course, not a question for me to decide. His books afford strong internal evidence of having been written to himself and his particular friends alone.

There has long existed in literature a fatal and unfounded prejudice, which it will be the office of this age to overthrow, the idea that the mere bulk of a work must enter largely into our estimate of its merit. I do not suppose even the weakest of the Quarterly reviewers weak enough to maintain that in a book's size or mass, abstractly considered, there is anything which especially calls for our admiration. A mountain, simply through the sensation of physical magnitude which it conveys, does, indeed, affect us with a sense of the sublime, but we cannot admit any such influence in the contemplation even of "The Columbiad." The Quarterlies themselves will not admit it. And yet, what else are we to understand by their continual prating about "sustained effort"? Granted that this sustained effort has accomplished an epic — let us then admire the effort (if this be a thing admirable), but certainly not the epic on the effort's account. Common-sense, in the time to come, may possibly insist upon measuring a work of art rather by the object it fulfils, by the impression it makes, than by the time it took to fulfil the object, or by the extent of "sustained effort" which became necessary to produce the impression. The fact is, that perseverance

is one thing and genius quite another; nor can all the transcendentalists in Heathendom confound them.

II

The pieces in the volumes entitled "Twice-Told Tales," are now in their third republication, and, of course, are thrice-told. Moreover, they are by no means *all* tales, either in the ordinary or in the legitimate understanding of the term. Many of them are pure essays; for example, "Sights from a Steeple," "Sunday at Home," "Little Annie's Ramble," "A Rill from the Town Pump," "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," "The Haunted Mind," "The Sister Years," "Snow Flakes," "Night Sketches," and "Footprints on the Sea Shore." I mention these matters chiefly on account of their discrepancy with that marked precision and finish by which the body of the work is distinguished.

Of the essays just named, I must be content to speak in brief. They are each and all beautiful, without being characterized by the polish and adaptation so visible in the tales proper. A painter would at once note their leading or predominant feature, and style it *repose*. There is no attempt at effect. All is quiet, thoughtful, subdued. Yet this repose may exist simultaneously with high originality of thought; and Mr. Hawthorne has demonstrated the fact. At every turn we meet with novel combinations; yet these combinations never surpass the limits of the quiet. We are soothed as we read; and withal is a calm astonishment that ideas so apparently obvious have never occurred or been presented to us before. Herein our author differs materially from Lamb or Hunt or

Hazlitt — who, with vivid originality of manner and expression, have less of the true novelty of thought than is generally supposed, and whose originality, at best, has an uneasy and meretricious quaintness, replete with startling effects unfounded in nature, and inducing trains of reflection which lead to no satisfactory result. The essays of Hawthorne have much of the character of Irving, with more of originality, and less of finish; while, compared with "The Spectator," they have a vast superiority at all points. "The Spectator," Mr. Irving, and Hawthorne have in common that tranquil and subdued manner which I have chosen to denominate *repose;* but, in the case of the two former, this repose is attained rather by the absence of novel combination, or of originality, than otherwise, and consists chiefly in the calm, quiet, unostentatious expression of commonplace thoughts, in an unambitious, unadulterated Saxon. In them, by strong effort, we are made to conceive the absence of all. In the essays before me the absence of effort is too obvious to be mistaken, and a strong under-current of *suggestion* runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis. In short, these effusions of Mr. Hawthorne are the product of a truly imaginative intellect, restrained, and in some measure repressed, by fastidiousness of taste, by constitutional melancholy, and by indolence.

But it is of his tales that I desire principally to speak. The tale proper, in my opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent, which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose. Were I bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, I

should answer, without hesitation — in the composition of a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. I need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting. We may continue the reading of a prose composition, from the very nature of prose itself, much longer than we can persevere, to any good purpose, in the perusal of a poem. This latter, if truly fulfilling the demands of the poetic sentiment, induces an exaltation of the soul which cannot be long sustained. All high excitements are necessarily transient. Thus a long poem is a paradox. And, without unity of impression, the deepest effects cannot be brought about. Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more. A poem *too* brief may produce a vivid, but never an intense or enduring impression. Without a certain continuity of effort — without a certain duration or repetition of purpose — the soul is never deeply moved. There must be the dropping of the water upon the rock. De Béranger has wrought brilliant things, pungent and spirit-stirring; but, like all immassive bodies, they lack *momentum*, and thus fail to satisfy the Poetic Sentiment. They sparkle and excite, but, from want of continuity, fail deeply to impress. Extreme brevity will degenerate into epigrammatism; but the sin of extreme length is even more unpardonable. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*

Were I called upon, however, to designate that class

of composition which, next to such a poem as I have suggested, should best fulfil the demands of high genius — should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion — I should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale, as Mr. Hawthorne has here exemplified it. I allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simple cessation in reading would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fulness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences — resulting from weariness or interruption.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents — he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which

leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

We have said that the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem. In fact, while the *rhythm* of this latter is an essential aid in the development of the poem's highest idea — the idea of the Beautiful — the artificialities of this rhythm are an inseparable bar to the development of all points of thought or expression which have their basis in *Truth*. But Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale. Some of the finest tales are tales of ratiocination. Thus the field of this species of composition, if not in so elevated a region on the mountain of Mind, is a table-land of far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem. Its products are never so rich, but infinitely more numerous, and more appreciable by the mass of mankind. The writer of the prose tale, in short, may bring to his theme a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression — (the ratiocinative, for example, the sarcastic, or the humorous) which are not only antagonistical to the nature of the poem, but absolutely forbidden by one of its most peculiar and indispensable adjuncts; we allude, of course, to rhythm. It may be added, here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at a great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points. And here it will be seen how full

of prejudice are the usual animadversions against those *tales of effect*, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of "Blackwood." The impressions produced were wrought in a legitimate sphere of action, and constituted a legitimate although sometimes an exaggerated interest. They were relished by every man of genius: although there were found many men of genius who condemned them without just ground. The true critic will but demand that the design intended be accomplished, to the fullest extent, by the means most advantageously applicable.

We have very few American tales of real merit — we may say, indeed, none, with the exception of "The Tales of a Traveller" of Washington Irving, and these "Twice-Told Tales" of Mr. Hawthorne. Some of the pieces of Mr. John Neal abound in vigor and originality; but, in general, his compositions of this class are excessively diffuse, extravagant, and indicative of an imperfect sentiment of Art. Articles at random are, now and then, met with in our periodicals which might be advantageously compared with the best effusions of the British magazines; but, upon the whole, we are far behind our progenitors in this department of literature.

Of Mr. Hawthorne's "Tales" we would say, emphatically, that they belong to the highest region of Art — an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order. We and supposed, with good reason for so supposing, that he had been thrust into his present position by one of the impudent cliques which beset our literature, and whose pretensions it is our full purpose to expose at the earliest opportunity; but we have been most agreeably mistaken. We know of few compositions which the critic can more honestly

commend than these "Twice-Told Tales." As Americans, we feel proud of the book.

Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality — a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest. But the nature of the originality, so far as regards its manifestation in letters, is but imperfectly understood. The inventive or original mind as frequently displays itself in novelty of *tone* as in novelty of matter. Mr. Hawthorne is original in *all* points.

It would be a matter of some difficulty to designate the best of these tales; we repeat that, without exception, they are beautiful. "Wakefield" is remarkable for the skill with which an old idea, — a well-known incident, — is worked up or discussed. A man of whims conceives the purpose of quitting his wife and residing *incognito*, for twenty years, in her immediate neighborhood. Something of this kind actually happened in London. The force of Mr. Hawthorne's tale lies in the analysis of the motives which must or might have impelled the husband to such folly, in the first instance, with the possible causes of his perseverance. Upon this thesis a sketch of singular power has been constructed. "The Wedding Knell" is full of the boldest imagination, — an imagination fully controlled by taste. The most captious critic could find no flaw in this production. "The Minister's Black Veil" is a masterly composition of which the sole defect is that to the rabble its exquisite skill will be *caviare*. The obvious meaning of this article will be found to smother its insinuated one. The moral put into the mouth of the dying minister will be supposed to convey the true import of the narrative; and that a crime of dark dye (having reference to the

"young lady") has been committed, is a point which only minds congenial with that of the author will perceive. "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" is vividly original and managed most dexterously. "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" is exceedingly well imagined, and executed with surpassing ability. The artist breathes in every line of it. "The White Old Maid" is objectionable, even more than "The Minister's Black Veil," on the score of its mysticism. Even with the thoughtful and analytic, there will be much trouble in penetrating its entire import.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills" we would quote in full, had we space; not as evincing higher talent than any of the other pieces, but as affording an excellent example of the author's peculiar ability. The subject is commonplace. A witch subjects the Distant and the Past to the view of a mourner. It has been the fashion to describe, in such cases, a mirror in which the images of the absent appear; or a cloud of smoke is made to arise, and thence the figures are gradually unfolded. Mr. Hawthorne has wonderfully heightened his effect by making the ear, in place of the eye, the medium by which the fantasy is conveyed. The head of the mourner is enveloped in the cloak of the witch, and within its magic folds there arise sounds which have an all-sufficient intelligence. Throughout this article also, the artist is conspicuous, — not more in positive than in negative merits. Not only is all done that should be done, but (what perhaps is an end with more difficulty attained) there is nothing done which should not be. Every word *tells*, and there is not a word which does *not* tell.

In "Howe's Masquerade" we observe something which resembles a plagiarism, — but which *may be* a

very flattering coincidence of thought. We quote the passage in question.

"*With a dark flush of wrath* upon his brow, they saw the General *draw his sword* and *advance to meet* the figure *in the cloak* before the latter had stepped one pace upon the floor. '*Villain, unmuffle yourself,*' cried he. 'You pass no farther!' The figure, without blenching a hair's breadth from the sword which was pointed at his breast, made a solemn pause, and *lowered the cape of the cloak* from about his face, yet not sufficiently for the spectators to catch a glimpse of it. But Sir William Howe had evidently seen enough. The sternness of his countenance gave place to a look of wild amazement, if not horror, while he recoiled several steps from the figure, *and let fall his sword* upon the floor." ii. 21.

The idea here is, that the figure in the cloak is the phantom or reduplication of Sir William Howe; but in an article called "William Wilson," one of the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," we have not only the same idea, but the same idea similarly presented in several respects. We quote two paragraphs, which our readers may compare with what has been already given. We have italicised, above, the immediate particulars of resemblance.

The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce, apparently, a material change in the arrangement at the upper or farther end of the room. A large mirror, it appeared to me, now stood where none had been perceptible before: and as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, *advanced* with a feeble and tottering gait to meet me. Thus it appeared I say, but was not. It was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of dissolution. Not a line in all the marked and

singular lineaments of that face which was not even identically mine own. *His mask and cloak lay where he had thrown them, upon the floor.* ii. 57.

Here, it will be observed that, not only are the two general conceptions identical, but there are various *points* of similarity. In each case the figure seen is the wraith or duplication of the beholder. In each case the scene is a masquerade. In each case the figure is cloaked. In each there is a quarrel,— that is to say, angry words pass between the parties. In each the beholder is enraged. In each the cloak and sword fall upon the floor. The "villain, unmuffle yourself," of Mr. Hawthorne is precisely paralleled by a passage at page 56, of "William Wilson."

III

I must hasten to conclude this paper with a summary of Mr. Hawthorne's merits and demerits.

He is peculiar and not original — unless in those detailed fancies and detached thoughts which his want of general originality will deprive of the appreciation due to them, in preventing them from ever reaching the public eye. He is infinitely too fond of allegory, and can never hope for popularity so long as he persists in it. This he will not do, for allegory is at war with the whole tone of his nature, which disports itself never so well as when escaping from the mysticism of his "Goodman Browns" and "White Old Maids" into the hearty, genial, but still Indian-summer sunshine of his "Wakefields" and "Little Annie's Rambles." Indeed, his spirit of "metaphor run-mad" is clearly imbibed from the phalanx and phalanstery atmosphere in which he has been so long struggling for breath.

He has not half the material for the exclusiveness of authorship that he possesses for its universality. He has the purest style, the finest taste, the most available scholarship, the most delicate humor, the most touching pathos, the most radiant imagination, the most consummate ingenuity; and with these varied good qualities he has done *well* as a mystic. But is there any one of these qualities which should prevent his doing doubly as well in a career of honest, upright, sensible, prehensible, and comprehensible things? Let him mend his pen, get a bottle of visible ink, come out from the Old Manse, cut Mr. Alcott, hang (if possible) the editor of the "Dial," and throw out of the window to the pigs all his odd numbers of the "North American Review."

DICKENS'S "BARNABY RUDGE"

WE often hear it said, of this or of that proposition, that it may be good in theory, but will not answer in practice; and in such assertions we find the substance of all the sneers at critical art which so gracefully curl the upper lips of a tribe which is beneath it. We mean the small geniuses — the literary Titmice — animalculæ which judge of merit solely by result, and boast of the solidity, tangibility, and infallibility of the test which they employ. The worth of a work is most accurately estimated, they assure us, by the number of those who peruse it; and "does a book sell?" is a query embodying, in their opinion, all that need be said or sung on the topic of its fitness for sale. We should as soon think of maintaining, in the presence of these creatures, the *dictum* of Anaxagoras, that snow is black, as of disputing, for example, the profundity of that genius which, in a run of five hundred nights, has rendered itself evident in "London Assurance." "What," cry they, "are critical precepts to us, or to anybody? Were we to observe all the critical rules in creation we should still be unable to write a good book" — a point, by the way, which we shall not now pause to deny. "Give us *results*," they vociferate, "for we are plain men of common-sense. We contend for fact instead of fancy — for practice in opposition to theory."

The mistake into which the Titmice have been innocently led, however, is precisely that of dividing the practice which they would uphold from the theory to which they would object. They should have been told in infancy, and thus prevented from exposing themselves in old age, that theory and practice are in so much one that the former implies or includes the latter. A theory is only good as such in proportion to its reducibility to practice. If the practice fail, it is because the theory is imperfect. To say what they are in the daily habit of saying — that such or such a matter may be good in theory but is false in practice — is to perpetrate a bull, to commit a paradox, to state a contradiction in terms, — in plain words, to tell a lie *which is a lie at sight* to the understanding of anything bigger than a Titmouse.

But we have no idea, just now, of persecuting the Tittlebats by too close a scrutiny into their little opinions. It is not our purpose, for example, to press them with so grave a weapon as the *argumentum ad absurdum*, or to ask them why, if the popularity of a book be in fact the measure of its worth, we should not be at once in condition to admit the inferiority of Newton's "Principia" to Hoyle's "Games;" of "Ernest Maltravers" to "Jack-the-Giant-Killer" or "Jack Sheppard" or "Jack Brag;" and of Dick's "Christian Philosopher" to "Charlotte Temple" or the "Memoirs of De Grammont," or to one or two dozen other works which must be nameless. Our present design is but to speak, at some length, of a book which in so much concerns the Titmice that it affords them the very kind of demonstration which they chiefly affect — *practical* demonstration — of the fallacy of one of their favorite dogmas; we mean the

dogma that no work of fiction can fully suit, at the same time, the critical and the popular taste; in fact, that the disregarding or contravening of critical rule is absolutely essential to success, beyond a certain and very limited extent, with the public at large. And if, in the course of our random observations — for we have no space for systematic review — it should appear, incidentally, that the vast popularity of "Barnaby Rudge" must be regarded less as the measure of its value than as the legitimate and inevitable result of certain well-understood critical propositions reduced by genius into practice, there will appear nothing more than what has before become apparent in the "Vicar of Wakefield" of Goldsmith, or in the "Robinson Crusoe" of De Foe — nothing more, in fact, than what is a truism to all but the Titmice.

Those who know us will not, from what is here premised, suppose it our intention, to enter into any wholesale laudation of "Barnaby Rudge." In truth, our design may appear, at a cursory glance, to be very different indeed. Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that a critic once presented Apollo with a severe censure upon an excellent poem. The god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only troubled himself about the errors. Apollo presented him with a sack of unwinnowed wheat, and bade him pick out all the chaff for his pains. Now we have not fully made up our minds that the god was in the right. We are not sure that the limit of critical duty is not very generally misapprehended. Excellence may be considered an axiom, or a proposition which becomes self-evident just in proportion to the clearness or precision with which it is put. If it fairly exists, in this

sense, it requires no farther elucidation. It is not excellence if it need to be demonstrated as such. To point out too particularly the beauties of a work is to admit, tacitly, that these beauties are not wholly admirable. Regarding, then, excellence as that which is capable of self-manifestation, it but remains for the critic to show when, where, and how it fails in becoming manifest; and, in this showing, it will be the fault of the book itself if what of beauty it contains be not, at least, placed in the fairest light. In a word, we may assume, notwithstanding a vast deal of pitiable cant upon this topic, that in pointing out frankly the errors of a work, we do nearly all that is critically necessary in displaying its merits. In teaching what perfection *is*, how, in fact, shall we more rationally proceed than in specifying what it *is not?*

The plot of "Barnaby Rudge" runs thus: About a hundred years ago, Geoffrey Haredale and John Chester were schoolmates in England, the former being the scapegoat and drudge of the latter. Leaving school, the boys become friends, with much of the old understanding. Haredale loves; Chester deprives him of his mistress. The one cherishes the most deadly hatred; the other merely contemns and avoids. By routes widely different both attain mature age. Haredale, remembering his old love, and still cherishing his old hatred, remains a bachelor and is poor. Chester, among other crimes, is guilty of the seduction and heartless abandonment of a Gypsy girl, who, after the desertion of her lover, gives birth to a son, and, falling into evil courses, is finally hung at Tyburn. The son is received and taken charge of at an inn, called the Maypole, upon the borders of Epping forest and about twelve miles from London. This inn is

kept by one John Willet, a burly-headed and very obtuse little man, who has a son, Joe, and who employs his *protégé*, under the single name of Hugh, as perpetual hostler at the inn. Hugh's father marries, in the mean time, a rich *parvenue*, who soon dies, but not before having presented Mr. Chester with a boy, Edward. The father (a thoroughly selfish man-of-the-world, whose model is Chesterfield) educates this son at a distance, seeing him rarely, and calling him to the paternal residence, at London, only when he has attained the age of twenty-four or five. He, the father, has, long ere this time, spent the fortune brought him by his wife, having been living upon his wits and a small annuity for some eighteen years. The son is recalled chiefly that by marrying an heiress, on the strength of his own personal merit and the reputed wealth of old Chester, he may enable the latter to continue his gayeties in old age. But of this design, as well as of his poverty, Edward is kept in ignorance for some three or four years after his recall; when the father's discovery of what he considers an inexpedient love-entanglement on the part of the son induces him to disclose the true state of his affairs as well as the real tenor of his intentions.

Now the love-entanglement of which we speak is considered inexpedient by Mr. Chester for two reasons — the first of which is, that the lady beloved is the orphan niece of his old enemy, Haredale, and the second is, that Haredale (although in circumstances which have been much and very unexpectedly improved during the preceding twenty-two years) is still insufficiently wealthy to meet the views of Mr. Chester.

We say that, about twenty-two years before the period in question, there came an unlooked-for change

in the worldly circumstances of Haredale. This gentleman has an elder brother, Reuben, who has long possessed the family inheritance of the Haredales, residing at a mansion called The Warren, not far from the Maypole Inn, which is itself a portion of the estate. Reuben *is a widower*, with one child, a daughter, Emma. Besides this daughter, there are living with him a gardener, a steward (whose name is Rudge) and *two* women servants, one of whom is the wife of Rudge. On the night of the nineteenth of March, 1733, Rudge murders his master for the sake of a large sum of money which he is known to have in possession. During the struggle, Mr. Haredale grasps the cord of an alarm-bell which hangs within his reach, but succeeds in sounding it only once or twice, when it is severed by the knife of the ruffian, who then, completing his bloody business and securing the money, proceeds to quit the chamber. While doing this, however, he is disconcerted by meeting the gardener, whose pallid countenance evinces suspicion of the deed committed. The murderer is thus forced to kill his fellow-servant. Having done so, the idea strikes him of transferring the burden of the crime from himself. He dresses the corpse of the gardener in his own clothes, puts upon its finger his own ring, and in its pocket his own watch, then drags it to a pond in the grounds, and throws it in. He now returns to the house, and, disclosing all to his wife, requests her to become a partner in his flight. Horror-stricken, she falls to the ground. He attempts to raise her. She seizes his wrist, *staining her hand with blood in the attempt.* She renounces him forever; yet promises to conceal the crime. Alone, he flees the country. The next morning, Mr. Haredale

being found murdered, and the steward and gardener being both missing, both are suspected. Mrs. Rudge leaves The Warren, and retires to an obscure lodging in London (where she lives upon an annuity allowed her by Haredale) having given birth, *on the very day after the murder*, to a son, Barnaby Rudge, who proves an idiot, who bears upon his wrist a red mark, and who is born possessed with a maniacal horror of blood.

Some months since the assassination having elapsed, what appears to be the corpse of Rudge is discovered, and the outrage is attributed to the gardener. Yet not universally: — for, as Geoffrey Haredale comes into possession of the estate, there are not wanting suspicions (fomented by Chester) of his own participation in the deed. This taint of suspicion, acting upon his hereditary gloom, together with the natural grief and horror of the atrocity, embitters the whole life of Haredale. He secludes himself at The Warren, and acquires a monomaniac acerbity of temper relieved only by love of his beautiful niece.

Time wears away. Twenty-two years pass by. The niece has ripened into womanhood, and loves young Chester without the knowledge of her uncle or the youth's father. Hugh has grown a stalwart man — the type of man *the animal*, as his father is of man the ultra-civilized. Rudge, the murderer, returns, urged to his undoing by Fate. He appears at the Maypole and inquires stealthily of the circumstances which have occurred at The Warren in his absence. He proceeds to London, discovers the dwelling of his wife, threatens her with the betrayal of her idiot son into vice and extorts from her the bounty of Haredale. Revolting at such appropriation of such means, the

widow, with Barnaby, again seeks The Warren, renounces the annuity, and, refusing to assign any reason for her conduct, states her intention of quitting London forever, and of burying herself in some obscure retreat — a retreat which she begs Haredale not to attempt discovering. When he seeks her in London the next day, she is gone; and there are no tidings, either of herself or of Barnaby, *until the expiration of five years* — which bring the time up to that of the celebrated "No Popery" riots of Lord George Gordon.

In the mean while, and immediately subsequent to the reappearance of Rudge, Haredale and the elder Chester, each heartily desirous of preventing the union of Edward and Emma, have entered into a covenant, the result of which is that, by means of treachery on the part of Chester, permitted on that of Haredale, the lovers misunderstand each other and are estranged. Joe, also, the son of the innkeeper, Willet, having been coquetted with, to too great an extent, by Dolly Varden (the pretty daughter of one Gabriel Varden, a locksmith of Clerkenwell, London), and having been otherwise maltreated at home, enlists in His Majesty's army and is carried beyond seas, to America, not returning until toward the close of the riots. Just before their commencement, Rudge, in a midnight prowl about the scene of his atrocity, is encountered by an individual who had been familiar with him in earlier life, while living at The Warren. This individual, terrified at what he supposes, very naturally, to be the ghost of the murdered Rudge, relates his adventure to his companions at the Maypole, and John Willet conveys the intelligence, forthwith, to Mr. Haredale. Connecting the apparition, in his own

mind, with the peculiar conduct of Mrs. Rudge, this gentleman imbibes a suspicion, at once, of the true state of affairs. This suspicion (which he mentions to no one) is, moreover, very strongly confirmed by an occurrence happening to Varden, the locksmith, who, visiting the woman late one night, finds her in communion of a nature apparently most confidential with a ruffian whom the locksmith knows to be such, without knowing the man himself. Upon an attempt, on the part of Varden, to seize this ruffian, he is thwarted by Mrs. Rudge; and upon Haredale's inquiring minutely into the personal appearance of the man, he is found to accord with Rudge. We have already shown that the ruffian was in fact Rudge himself. Acting upon the suspicion thus aroused, Haredale watches, by night, alone, in the deserted house formerly occupied by Mrs. Rudge in hope of here coming upon the murderer, and makes other exertions with the view of arresting him; but all in vain.

It is, also, at the conclusion *of the five years*, that the hitherto uninvaded retreat of Mrs. Rudge is disturbed by a message from her husband, demanding money. He has discovered her abode by accident. Giving him what she has at the time, she afterwards eludes him, and hastens, with Barnaby, to bury herself in the crowd of London, until she can find opportunity again to seek retreat in some more distant region of England. But the riots have now begun. The idiot is beguiled into joining the mob, and, becoming separated from his mother (who, growing ill through grief, is borne to a hospital) meets with his old playmate Hugh, and becomes with him a ringleader in the rebellion.

The riots proceed. A conspicuous part is borne in

them by one Simon Tappertit, a fantastic and conceited little apprentice of Varden's, and a sworn enemy to Joe Willet, who has rivalled him in the affection of Dolly. A hangman, Dennis, is also very busy amid the mob. Lord George Gordon, and his secretary, Gashford, with John Grueby, his servant, appear, of course, upon the scene. Old Chester, who, during the five years, has become Sir John, instigates Gashford, who has received personal insult from Haredale (a Catholic and consequently obnoxious to the mob) — instigates Gashford to procure the burning of The Warren, and to abduct Emma during the excitement ensuing. The mansion is burned (Hugh, who also fancies himself wronged by Haredale, being chief actor in the outrage), and Miss Haredale carried off in company with Dolly, who had long lived with her, and whom Tappertit abducts upon his own responsibility. Rudge, in the mean time, finding the eye of Haredale upon him (since he has become aware of the watch kept nightly at his wife's), goaded by the dread of solitude, and fancying that his sole chance of safety lies in joining the rioters, hurries upon their track to the doomed Warren. He arrives too late; the mob have departed. Skulking about the ruins, he is discovered by Haredale and finally captured, without a struggle, within the glowing walls of the very chamber in which the deed was committed. He is conveyed to prison, where he meets and recognizes Barnaby, who had been captured as a rioter. The mob assail and burn the jail. The father and son escape. Betrayed by Dennis, both are again retaken, and Hugh shares their fate. In Newgate, Dennis, through accident, discovers the parentage of Hugh, and an effort is made in vain to interest Chester in behalf of his son.

Finally, Varden procures the pardon of Barnaby; but Hugh, Rudge, and Dennis are hung. At the eleventh hour, Joe returns from abroad with one arm. In company with Edward Chester, he performs prodigies of valor (during the last riots) on behalf of the government. The two, with Haredale and Varden, rescue Emma and Dolly. A double marriage, of course, takes place; for Dolly has repented her fine airs, and the prejudices of Haredale are overcome. Having killed Chester in a duel, he quits England forever, and ends his days in the seclusion of an Italian convent. Thus, after summary disposal of the understrappers, ends the drama of "Barnaby Rudge."

We have given, as may well be supposed, but a very meagre outline of the story, and we have given it in the simple or natural sequence. That is to say, we have related the events, as nearly as might be, in the order of their occurrence. But this order would by no means have suited the purpose of the novelist, whose design has been to maintain the secret of the murder, and the consequent mystery which encircles Rudge, and the actions of his wife, until the catastrophe of his discovery by Haredale. The *thesis* of the novel may thus be regarded as based upon curiosity. Every point is so arranged as to perplex the reader, and whet his desire for elucidation: — for example, the first appearance of Rudge at the Maypole; his questions; his persecution of Mrs. Rudge; the ghost seen by the frequenter of the Maypole; and Haredale's impressive conduct in consequence. What *we* have told, in the very beginning of our digest, in regard to the shifting of the gardener's dress, is sedulously kept from the reader's knowledge until he learns it from Rudge's own confession in jail. We

say sedulously; for, the intention once known, the traces of the design can be found upon every page. There is an amusing and exceedingly ingenious instance at page 145, where Solomon Daisy describes his adventure with the ghost.

"'It was a ghost — a spirit,' cried Daisy.

"'Whose?' they all three asked together.

"In the excess of his emotion (for he fell back trembling in his chair and waved his hand as if entreating them to question him no farther) *his answer was lost upon all* but old John Willet, who happened to be seated close beside him.

"'Who?' — cried Parkes and Tom Cobb — 'Who was it?

"'Gentlemen,' said Mr. Willet, after a long pause, 'you need n't ask. The likeness of a murdered man. This is the nineteenth of March.'

"A profound silence ensued."

The impression here skilfully conveyed is, that the ghost seen is that of Reuben Haredale; and the mind of the not-too-acute reader is at once averted from the true state of the case — from the murderer, Rudge, living in the body.

Now there can be no question that, by such means as these, many points which are comparatively insipid in the natural sequence of our digest, and which would have been comparatively insipid even if given in full detail in a natural sequence, are endued with the interest of mystery; but neither can it be denied that a vast many more points are at the same time deprived of all effect, and become null, through the impossibility of comprehending them without the key. The author, who, cognizant of his plot, writes with this cognizance continually operating upon him, and thus *writes to himself* in spite of himself, does not, of

course, feel that much of what is effective to his own informed perception must necessarily be lost upon his uninformed readers; and he himself is never in condition, as regards his own work, to bring the matter to test. But the reader may easily satisfy himself of the validity of our objection. Let him *re-peruse* "Barnaby Rudge" — and with a pre-comprehension of the mystery, these points of which we speak break out in all directions like stars, and throw quadruple brilliance over the narrative, a brilliance which a correct taste will at once declare unprofitably sacrificed at the shrine of the keenest interest of mere mystery.

The design of mystery, however, being once determined upon by an author, it becomes imperative, first, that no undue or inartistical means be employed to conceal the secret of the plot; and, secondly, that the secret be well kept. Now, when, at page 16, we read that "the body of *poor Mr. Rudge, the steward, was found*" months after the outrage, etc., we see that Mr. Dickens has been guilty of no misdemeanor against Art in stating what was not the fact; since the falsehood is put into the mouth of Solomon Daisy, and given merely as the impression of this individual and of the public. The writer has not asserted it in his own person, but ingeniously conveyed an idea (false in itself, yet a belief in which is necessary for the effect of the tale) by the mouth of one of his characters. The case is different, however, when Mrs. Rudge is repeatedly denominated "the widow." It is the author who, himself, frequently so terms her. This is disingenuous and inartistical; accidentally so, of course. We speak of the matter merely by way of illustrating our point, and as an oversight on the part of Mr. Dickens.

That the secret be well kept is obviously necessary. A failure to preserve it until the proper moment of *dénouement*, throws all into confusion, so far as regards the effect intended. If the mystery leak out, against the author's will, his purposes are immediately at odds and ends; for he proceeds upon the supposition that certain impressions *do* exist, which do *not* exist, in the mind of his readers. We are not prepared to say, so positively as we could wish, whether, by the public at large, the whole mystery of the murder committed by Rudge, with the identity of the Maypole ruffian with Rudge himself, was fathomed at any period previous to the period intended, or, if so, whether at a period so early as materially to interfere with the interest designed; but we are forced, through sheer modesty, to suppose this the case; since, by ourselves individually, the secret was distinctly understood immediately upon the perusal of the story of Solomon Daisy, which occurs at the seventh page of this volume of three hundred and twenty-three. In the number of the Philadelphia "Saturday Evening Post," for May the first, 1841 (the tale having then only begun) will be found a *prospective notice* of some length, in which we made use of the following words: —

That Barnaby is the son of the murderer may not appear evident to our readers — but we will explain. The person murdered is Mr. Reuben Haredale. He was found assassinated in his bed-chamber. His steward (Mr Rudge, senior) and his gardener (name not mentioned) are missing. At first both are suspected. "Some months afterward" — here we use the words of the story — "the steward's body, scarcely to be recognized but by his clothes and the watch and ring he wore, was found at the bottom of a piece of water in the grounds, with a deep

gash in the breast, where he had been stabbed by a knife. He was only partly dressed; and all people agreed that he had been sitting up reading in his own room, where there were many traces of blood, and was suddenly fallen upon and killed, before his master."

Now, be it observed, it is not the author himself who asserts that *the steward's body was found;* he has put the words in the mouth of one of his characters. His design is to make it appear, in the *dénouement*, that the steward, Rudge, first murdered the gardener, then went to his master's chamber, murdered *him*, was interrupted by his (Rudge's) wife, whom he seized and held *by the wrist*, to prevent her giving the alarm — that he then, after possessing himself of the booty desired, returned to the gardener's room, exchanged clothes with him, put upon the corpse his own watch and ring, and secreted it where it was afterwards discovered at so late a period that the features could not be identified.

The differences between our preconceived ideas, as here stated, and the actual facts of the story, will be found immaterial. The gardener was murdered, not before but after his master; and that Rudge's wife seized *him* by the wrist, instead of his seizing *her*, has so much the air of a mistake on the part of Mr. Dickens, that we can scarcely speak of our own version as erroneous. The grasp of a murderer's bloody hand on the wrist of a woman *enceinte*, would have been more likely to produce the effect described (and this every one will allow) than the grasp of the hand of the woman upon the wrist of the assassin. We may therefore say of our supposition as Talleyrand said of some cockney's bad French — *que s'il ne soit pas Français, assurément donc il le doit être* — that if we did not rightly prophesy, yet, at least, our prophecy *should have been* right.

We are informed in the Preface to "Barnaby Rudge" that "no account of the Gordon Riots having been introduced into any work of fiction, and the subject presenting very extraordinary and remarkable features," our author "was led to project this tale." But for this distinct announcement (for Mr. Dickens can scarcely have deceived himself) we should have looked upon the riots as altogether an afterthought. It is evident that they have no necessary connection with the story. In our digest, which carefully includes all *essentials* of the plot, we have dismissed the doings of the mob in a paragraph. The whole event of the drama would have proceeded as well without as with them. They have even the appearance of being *forcibly* introduced. In our compendium above, it will be seen that we emphasized several allusions to an interval of *five years*. The action is brought up to a certain point. The train of events is, so far, uninterrupted — nor is there any apparent need of interruption — yet all the characters are now thrown forward for a period of *five years*. And why? We ask in vain. It is not to bestow upon the lovers a more decorous maturity of age — for this is the only possible idea which suggests itself — Edward Chester is already eight-and-twenty, and Emma Haredale would, in America at least, be upon the list of old maids. No — there is no such reason; nor does there appear to be any one more plausible than that, as it is now the year of our Lord 1775, an advance of five years will bring the *dramatis personæ* up to a very remarkable period, affording an admirable opportunity for their display — the period, in short, of the "No Popery" riots. This was the idea with which we were forcibly impressed in perusal, and

which nothing less than Mr. Dickens's positive assurance to the contrary would have been sufficient to eradicate.

It is, perhaps, but one of a thousand instances of the disadvantages, both to the author and the public, of the present absurd fashion of periodical novel-writing, that our author had not sufficiently considered or determined upon *any* particular plot when he began the story now under review. In fact, we see, or fancy that we see, numerous traces of indecision — traces which a dexterous supervision of the complete work might have enabled him to erase. We have already spoken of the intermission of a lustrum. The opening speeches of old Chester are by far too truly gentlemanly for his subsequent character. The wife of Varden, also, is too wholesale a shrew to be converted into the quiet wife — the original design was to punish her. At page 16, we read thus — Solomon Daisy is telling his story: —

"'I put as good a face upon it as I could, and, muffling myself up, started out with a lighted lantern in one hand and the key of the church in the other' — at this point of the narrative, the dress of the strange man rustled as if he had turned to hear more distinctly."

Here the design is to call the reader's attention to a *point* in the tale; but no subsequent explanation is made. Again, a few lines below: —

"The houses were all shut up, and the folks in doors, and perhaps there is only one man in the world who knows how dark it really was."

Here the intention is still more evident, but there is no result. Again, at page 54, the idiot draws Mr.

Chester to the window, and directs his attention to the clothes hanging upon the lines in the yard —

"'Look down,' he said softly; 'do you mark how they whisper in each other's ears, then dance and leap to make believe they are in sport? Do you see how they stop for a moment, when they think there is no one looking, and mutter among themselves again; and then how they roll and gambol, delighted with the mischief they've been plotting? Look at 'em now! See how they whirl and plunge. And now they stop again, and whisper cautiously together — little thinking, mind, how often I have lain upon the ground and watched them. I say — what is it that they plot and hatch? Do you know?'"

Upon perusal of these ravings, we at once supposed them to have allusion to some *real* plotting; and even now we cannot force ourselves to believe them not so intended. They suggested the opinion that Haredale himself would be implicated in the murder, and that the counsellings alluded to might be those of that gentleman with Rudge. It is by no means impossible that some such conception wavered in the mind of the author. At page 32 we have a confirmation of our idea, when Varden endeavors to arrest the murderer in the house of his wife —

"'Come back — come back!' exclaimed the woman, wrestling with and clasping him. 'Do not touch him, on your life. *He carries other lives besides his own.*'"

The *dénouement* fails to account for this exclamation.

In the beginning of the story much emphasis is placed upon the *two* female servants of Haredale, and upon his journey to and from London, as well as upon his wife. We have merely said, in our digest, that he was a widower, italicising the remark. All

these other points are, in fact, singularly irrelevant, in the supposition that the original design has not undergone modification.

Again, at page 57, when Haredale talks of "his dismantled and beggared hearth," we cannot help fancying that the author had in view some different wrong, or series of wrongs, perpetrated by Chester, than any which appear in the end. This gentleman, too, takes extreme and frequent pains to acquire dominion over the rough Hugh — this matter is particularly insisted upon by the novelist — we look, of course, for some important result, but the filching of a letter is nearly all that is accomplished. That Barnaby's delight in the desperate scenes of the rebellion is inconsistent with his horror of blood, will strike every reader; and this inconsistency seems to be the consequence of the *after-thought* upon which we have already commented. In fact, the title of the work, the elaborate and pointed manner of the commencement, the impressive description of The Warren, and especially of Mrs. Rudge, go far to show that Mr. Dickens has really deceived himself — that the soul of the plot, as originally conceived, was the murder of Haredale, with the subsequent discovery of the murderer in Rudge, but that this idea was afterwards abandoned, or rather suffered to be merged in that of the Popish riots. The result has been most unfavorable. That which, of itself, would have proved highly effective, has been rendered nearly null by its situation. In the multitudinous outrage and horror of the Rebellion, the *one* atrocity is utterly whelmed and extinguished.

The reasons of this deflection from the first purpose appear to us self-evident. One of them we have

already mentioned. The other is that our author discovered, when too late, that *he had anticipated, and thus rendered valueless, his chief effect.* This will be readily understood. The particulars of the assassination being withheld, the strength of the narrator is put forth, in the beginning of the story, to whet curiosity in respect to these particulars; and, so far, he is but in proper pursuance of his main design. But from this intention he unwittingly passes into the error of *exaggerating anticipation.* And error though it be, it is an error wrought with consummate skill. What, for example, could more vividly enhance our impression of the unknown horror enacted, than the deep and enduring gloom of Haredale — than the idiot's inborn awe of blood — or, especially, than the expression of countenance so imaginatively attributed to Mrs. Rudge — "the capacity for expressing terror — something only dimly seen, but never absent for a moment — the shadow of some look to which an instant of intense and most unutterable horror only could have given rise?" But it is a condition of the human fancy that the promises of such words are irredeemable. In the notice before mentioned we thus spoke upon this topic: —

This is a conception admirably adapted to whet curiosity in respect to the character of that event which is hinted at as forming the basis of the story. But this observation should not fail to be made — that the anticipation must surpass the reality; that no matter how terrific be the circumstances which, in the *dénouement*, shall appear to have occasioned the expression of countenance worn habitually by Mrs. Rudge, still they will not be able to satisfy the mind of the reader. He will surely be disappointed. The skilful intimation of horror held out by the artist produces an effect which will deprive his conclusion

of all. These intimations — these dark hints of some uncertain evil — are often rhetorically praised as effective, but are only justly so praised where there is *no dénouement* whatever — where the reader's imagination is left to clear up the mystery for itself; and this is not the design of Mr. Dickens.

And, in fact, our author was not long in seeing his precipitancy. He had placed himself in a dilemma from which even his high genius could not extricate him. He at once shifts the main interest, and in truth we do not see what better he could have done. The reader's attention becomes absorbed in the riots, and he fails to observe that what should have been the true catastrophe of the novel is exceedingly feeble and ineffective.

A few cursory remarks: — Mr. Dickens fails peculiarly in *pure* narration. See, for example, page 296, where the connection of Hugh and Chester is detailed by Varden. See also in "The Old Curiosity Shop," where, when the result is fully known, so many words are occupied in explaining the relationship of the brothers. The effect of the present narrative might have been materially increased by confining the action within the limits of London. The "Notre Dame" of Hugo affords a fine example of the force which can be gained by concentration, or unity of place. The unity of time is also sadly neglected, to no purpose, in "Barnaby Rudge." That Rudge should so long and so deeply feel the sting of conscience is inconsistent with his brutality. On page 15, the interval elapsing between the murder and Rudge's return is variously stated at twenty-two and twenty-four years. It may be asked why the inmates of The Warren failed to hear the alarm-bell which was heard by Solomon Daisy. The

idea of persecution by being tracked, as by bloodhounds, from one spot of quietude to another, is a favorite one with Mr. Dickens. Its effect cannot be denied. The stain upon Barnaby's wrist, caused by fright in the mother at so late a period of gestation as one day before mature parturition, is shockingly at war with all medical experience. When Rudge, escaped from prison, unshackled, with money at command, is in agony at his wife's refusal to perjure herself for his salvation — is it not *queer* that he should demand any other salvation than lay in his heels?

Some of the conclusions of chapters — see pages 40 and 100 — seem to have been written for the mere purpose of illustrating tail-pieces.

The leading idiosyncrasy of Mr. Dickens's remarkable humor, is to be found in his *translating the language of gesture, or action, or tone.* For example —

"The cronies nodded to each other, and Mr. Parkes remarked in an undertone, shaking his head meanwhile, *as who should say 'let no man contradict me, for I won't believe him,'* that Willet was in amazing force to-night."

The riots form a series of vivid pictures never surpassed. At page 17, the road between London and the Maypole is described as a horribly rough and dangerous, and at page 97, as an uncommonly smooth and convenient one. At page 116, how comes Chester in possession of the key of Mrs. Rudge's vacated house?

Mr. Dickens's English is usually pure. His most remarkable error is that of employing the adverb "directly" in the sense of "as soon as." For example — "Directly he arrived, Rudge said," etc. Bulwer is uniformly guilty of the same blunder.

It is observable that so original a stylist as our author should occasionally lapse into a gross imitation of what, itself, is a gross imitation. We mean the manner of Lamb — a manner based in the Latin construction. For example —

"In summer time its pumps suggest to thirsty idlers springs cooler and more sparkling and deeper than other wells; and as they trace the spillings of full pitchers on the heated ground, they snuff the freshness, and, sighing, cast sad looks towards the Thames, and think of baths and boats, and saunter on, despondent."

The wood-cut designs which accompany the edition before us are occasionally good. The copper engravings are pitiably ill-conceived and ill-drawn; and not only this, but are in broad contradiction of the wood-designs and text.

There are many coincidences wrought into the narrative — those, for example, which relate to the nineteenth of March; the dream of Barnaby, respecting his father, at the very period when his father is actually in the house; and the dream of Haredale previous to his final meeting with Chester. These things are meant to insinuate a fatality which, very properly, is not expressed in plain terms; but it is questionable whether the story derives more in ideality from their introduction than it might have gained of verisimilitude from their omission.

The *dramatis personæ* sustain the high fame of Mr. Dickens as a delineator of character. Miggs, the disconsolate handmaiden of Varden; Tappertit, his chivalrous apprentice; Mrs. Varden, herself; and Dennis, a hangman — may be regarded as original caricatures, of the highest merit as such. Their traits

are founded in acute observation of nature, but are exaggerated to the utmost admissible extent. Miss Haredale and Edward Chester are commonplaces — no effort has been made in their behalf. Joe Willet is a naturally drawn country youth. Stagg is a mere makeweight. Gashford and Gordon are truthfully copied. Dolly Varden is truth itself. Haredale, Rudge, and Mrs. Rudge are impressive only through the circumstances which surround them. Sir John Chester is, of course, not original, but is a vast improvement upon all his predecessors; his heartlessness is rendered somewhat too amusing, and his end too much that of a man of honor. Hugh is a noble conception. His fierce exultation in his animal powers; his subserviency to the smooth Chester; his mirthful contempt and patronage of Tappertit, and his brutal yet firm courage in the hour of death — form a picture to be set in diamonds. Old Willet is not surpassed by any character even among those of Dickens. He is nature itself; yet a step farther would have placed him in the class of caricatures. His combined conceit and obtusity are indescribably droll, and his peculiar misdirected energy when aroused is one of the most exquisite touches in all humorous painting. We shall never forget how heartily we laughed at his shaking Solomon Daisy and threatening to put him behind the fire, because the unfortunate little man was too much frightened to articulate. Varden is one of those free, jovial, honest fellows, at charity with all mankind, whom our author is so fond of depicting. And lastly, Barnaby, the hero of the tale — in him we have been somewhat disappointed. We have already said that his delight in the atrocities of the Rebellion is at variance with his horror of blood. But this horror of

blood is inconsequential; and of this we complain. Strongly insisted upon in the beginning of the narrative, it produces no adequate result. And here how fine an opportunity has Mr. Dickens missed! The conviction of the assassin, after the lapse of twenty-two years, might easily have been brought about through his son's mysterious awe of blood — *an awe created in the unborn by the assassination itself* — and this would have been one of the finest possible embodiments of the idea which we are accustomed to attach to "poetical justice." The raven, too, intensely amusing as it is, might have been made, more than we now see it, a portion of the conception of the fantastic Barnaby. Its croakings might have been *prophetically* heard in the course of the drama. Its character might have performed, in regard to that of the idiot, much the same part as does, in music, the accompaniment in respect to the air. Each might have been distinct. Each might have differed remarkably from the other. Yet between them there might have been wrought an analogical resemblance, and although each might have existed apart, they might have formed together a whole which would have been imperfect in the absence of either.

From what we have here said — and, perhaps, said without due deliberation — (for, alas! the hurried duties of the journalist preclude it) — there will not be wanting those who will accuse us of a mad design to detract from the pure fame of the novelist. But to such we merely say in the language of heraldry "ye should wear a plain point sanguine in your arms." If this be understood, well; if not, well again. There lives no man feeling a deeper reverence for genius than ourself. If we have not dwelt so especially upon

the high merits as upon the trivial defects of "Barnaby Rudge" we have already given our reasons for the omission, and these reasons will be sufficiently understood by all whom we care to understand them. The work before us is not, we think, equal to the tale which immediately preceded it; but there are few — very few others to which we consider it inferior. Our chief objection has not, perhaps, been so distinctly stated as we could wish. That this fiction, or indeed that any fiction written by Mr. Dickens, should be based in the excitement and maintenance of curiosity, we look upon as a misconception, on the part of the writer, of his own very great yet very peculiar powers. He has done this thing well, to be sure — he would do anything well in comparison with the herd of his contemporaries; but he has not done it so thoroughly well as his high and just reputation would demand. We think that the whole book has been an effort to him, solely through the nature of its design. He has been smitten with an untimely desire for a novel path. The idiosyncrasy of his intellect would lead him, naturally, into the most fluent and simple style of narration. In tales of ordinary sequence he may and will long reign triumphant. He has a *talent* for all things, but no positive *genius* for *adaptation*, and still less for that metaphysical art in which the souls of all *mysteries* lie. "Caleb Williams" is a far less noble work than "The Old Curiosity Shop;" but Mr. Dickens could no more have constructed the one than Mr. Godwin could have dreamed of the other.

LEVER'S "CHARLES O'MALLEY"

THE first point to be observed in the consideration of "Charles O'Malley" is the great *popularity* of the work. We believe that in this respect it has surpassed even the inimitable compositions of Mr. Dickens. At all events, it has met with a most extensive sale; and, although the graver journals have avoided its discussion, the ephemeral press has been nearly if not quite unanimous in its praise. To be sure the commendation, although unqualified, cannot be said to have abounded in specification, or to have been, in any regard, of a satisfactory character to one seeking precise ideas on the topic of the book's particular merit. It appears to us, in fact, that the cabalistical words "fun," "rollicking," and "devil-may-care," if indeed words they be, have been made to stand in good stead of all critical comment in the case of the work now under review. We first saw these dexterous expressions in a fly-leaf of "Opinions of the Press" appended to the renowned "Harry Lorrequer" by his publisher in Dublin. Thence transmitted, with complacent echo, from critic to critic, through daily, weekly, and monthly journals without number, they have come at length to form a pendant and a portion of our author's celebrity — have come to be regarded as sufficient response to the few ignoramuses, who, obstinate as ignorant, and foolhardy

as obstinate, venture to propound a question or two about the true claims of "Harry Lorrequer" or the justice of the pretensions of "Charles O'Malley."

We shall not insult our readers by supposing any one of them unaware of the fact that a book may be even exceedingly popular without any legitimate literary merit. This fact can be proven by numerous examples which, now and here, it will be unnecessary and perhaps indecorous to mention. The dogma, then, is absurdly false, that the popularity of a work is *prima facie* evidence of its excellence in some respects; that is to say, the dogma is false if we confine the meaning of excellence (as here of course it must be confined) to excellence in a literary sense. The truth is, that the popularity of a book is *prima facie* evidence of just the converse of the proposition; it is evidence of the book's *demerit*, inasmuch as it shows a "stooping to conquer," inasmuch as it shows that the author has dealt largely, if not altogether, in matters which are susceptible of appreciation by the mass of mankind, by uneducated thought, by uncultivated taste, by unrefined and unguided passion. So long as the world retains its present point of civilization, so long will it be almost an axiom that no extensively popular book, in the right application of the term, can be a work of high merit, *as regards those particulars of the work which are popular.* A book may be readily sold, may be universally read, for the sake of some half or two-thirds of its matter, which half or two-thirds may be susceptible of popular appreciation, while the one-half or one-third remaining may be the delight of the highest intellect and genius, and absolute *caviare* to the rabble. And just as

"Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,"

so will the writer of fiction, who looks most sagaciously to his own interest, combine all votes by intermingling with his loftier efforts such amount of less ethereal matter as will give general currency to his composition. And here we shall be pardoned for quoting some observations of the English artist, H. Howard. Speaking of imitation, he says: —

"The pleasure that results from it, even when employed upon the most ordinary materials, will always render that property of our art the most attractive with the majority, because it may be enjoyed with the least mental exertion. *All* men are in some degree judges of it. The cobbler in his own line may criticise Apelles; and popular opinions are never to be wholly disregarded concerning that which is addressed to the public — who, to a certain extent, are generally right; although as the language of the refined can never be intelligible to the uneducated, so the higher styles of art can never be acceptable to the multitude. In proportion as a work rises in the scale of intellect, it must necessarily become limited in the number of its admirers. For this reason the judicious artist, even in his loftiest efforts, will endeavor to introduce some of those qualities which are interesting to all, as a passport for those of a more intellectual character."

And these remarks upon painting — remarks which are mere truisms in themselves — embody nearly the whole *rationale* of the topic now under discussion. It may be added, however, that the skill with which the author addresses the lower taste of the populace is often a source of pleasure, because of admiration, to a taste higher and more refined, and may be made a point of comment and of commendation by the critic.

In our review of "Barnaby Rudge," we were prevented through want of space from showing how Mr. Dickens had so well succeeded in uniting all suffrages.

What we have just said, however, will suffice upon this point. While he has appealed in innumerable regards to the most exalted intellect, he has meanwhile invariably touched a certain string whose vibrations are omni-prevalent. We allude to his powers of imitation — that species of imitation to which Mr. Howard has reference — the faithful depicting of what is called still-life, and particularly of character in humble condition. It is his close observation and imitation of nature here which have rendered him popular, while his higher qualities, with the ingenuity evinced in addressing the general taste, have secured him the good word of the informed and intellectual.

But this is an important point upon which we desire to be distinctly understood. We wish here to record our positive dissent (be that dissent worth what it may) from a very usual opinion — the opinion that Mr. Dickens has done justice to his own genius — that any man ever failed to do grievous wrong to his own genius — in appealing to the popular judgment at all. As a matter of pecuniary policy alone, is any such appeal defensible. But we speak, of course, in relation to fame — in regard to that

> "spur that the clear spirit doth raise
> To scorn delights and live laborious days."

That a perfume should be found by any "clear spirit" in the incense of mere popular applause, is, to our own apprehension at least, a thing inconceivable, inappreciable, a paradox which gives the lie unto itself, a mystery more profound than the well of Democritus. Mr. Dickens has no more business with the rabble than a seraph with a *chapeau de bras*. What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba? What is

he to Jacques Bonhomme[1] or Jacques Bonhomme to him? The higher genius is a rare gift and divine. Ὦ πόλλων οὐ παντὶ φαείνεται . . . ὅς μιν ἴδῃ, μέγας οὗτος — not to all men Apollo shows himself; *he* is *alone great* who beholds him.[2] And his greatness has its office God-assigned. But that office is not a low communion with low, or even with ordinary intellect. The holy, the electric spark of genius is the medium of intercourse between the noble and more noble mind. For lesser purposes there are humbler agents. There are puppets enough, able enough, willing enough, to perform in literature the little things to which we have had reference. For one Fouqué there are fifty Molières. For one Angelo there are five hundred Jan Steens. For one Dickens there are five million Smolletts, Fieldings, Marryatts, Arthurs, Cocktons, Bogtons, and Frogtons.

It is, in brief, the duty of all whom circumstances have led into criticism — it is, at least, a duty from which *we* individually shall never shrink — to uphold the true dignity of genius, to combat its degradation, to plead for the exercise of its powers in those bright fields which are its legitimate and peculiar province, and which for it alone lie gloriously outspread.

But to return to "Charles O'Malley" and its popularity. We have endeavored to show that this latter must not be considered in any degree as the measure of its merit, but should rather be understood as indicating a deficiency in this respect, when we bear in mind, as we should do, the highest aims of intellect in fiction. A slight examination of the work (for in truth it is worth no more) will sustain us in what

[1] Nickname for the populace in the middle ages.

[2] CALLIMACHUS: *Hymn to Apollo*, 9–10.

we have said. The plot is exceedingly meagre. Charles O'Malley, the hero, is a young orphan Irishman, living in Galway County, Ireland, in the house of his uncle Godfrey, to whose sadly encumbered estates the youth is heir apparent and presumptive. He becomes enamoured, while on a visit to a neighbor, of Miss Lucy Dashwood, and finds a rival in a Captain Hammersley. Some words carelessly spoken by Lucy inspire him with a desire for military renown. After sojourning, therefore, for a brief period, at Dublin University, he obtains a commission and proceeds to the Peninsula with the British army under Wellington. Here he distinguishes himself; is promoted; and meets frequently with Miss Dashwood, whom obstinately, and in spite of the lady's own acknowledgment of love for himself, he supposes in love with Hammersley. Upon the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo he returns home; finds his uncle, of course, *just* dead; and sells his commission to disencumber the estate. Presently Napoleon escapes from Elba, and our hero, obtaining a staff appointment under Picton, returns to the Peninsula, is present at Waterloo (where Hammersley is killed), saves the life of Lucy's father for the second time, as he has already twice saved that of Lucy herself; is rewarded by the hand of the latter; and, making his way back to O'Malley Castle, "lives happily all the rest of his days."

In and about this plot (if such it may be called) there are more absurdities than we have patience to enumerate. The author, or narrator, for example, is supposed to be Harry Lorrequer as far as the end of the preface, which, by the way, is one of the best portions of the book. O'Malley then tells his own story. But the publishing office of the "Dublin University

Magazine" (in which the narrative originally appeared) having been burned down, there ensues a sad confusion of identity between O'Malley and Lorrequer, so that it is difficult, for the nonce, to say which is which. In the want of copy consequent upon the disaster, James, the novelist, comes in to the relief of Lorrequer, or perhaps of O'Malley, with one of the flattest and most irrelevant of love-tales. Meantime, in the story proper are repetitions without end. We have already said that the hero *saves the life of his mistress twice, and of her father twice.* But not content with this, he has two mistresses, and saves the life of both, at different periods, in precisely the same manner — that is to say, by causing his horse in each instance to perform a Munchausen side-leap at the moment when a spring forward would have impelled him upon his beloved. And then we have one unending, undeviating succession of junketings, in which "devilled kidneys" are never by any accident found wanting. The unction and pertinacity with which the author discusses what he chooses to denominate "devilled kidneys" are indeed edifying, to say no more. The truth is, that drinking, telling anecdotes, and devouring "devilled kidneys" may be considered as the sum total, as the *thesis* of the book. Never, in the whole course of his eventful life, does Mr. O'Malley get "two or three assembled together" without seducing them forthwith to a table, and placing before them a dozen of wine and a dish of "devilled kidneys." This accomplished, the parties begin what seems to be the business of the author's existence — the narration of unusually *broad tales* — like those of the Southdown mutton. And here, in fact, we have the plan of that whole work of which the "United Service Gazette"

has been pleased to vow it "would rather be the author than of all the 'Pickwicks' and 'Nicklebys' in the world"—a sentiment which we really blush to say has been echoed by many respectable members of our own press. The general plot or narrative is a mere thread upon which after-dinner anecdotes, some good, some bad, some utterly worthless, and not one truly original, are strung with about as much method, and about half as much dexterity, as we see ragged urchins employ in stringing the kernels of nuts.

It would, indeed, be difficult to convey to one who has not examined this production for himself, any idea of the exceedingly rough, clumsy, and inartistical manner in which even this bald conception is carried out. The stories are absolutely dragged in by the ears. So far from finding them result naturally or plausibly from the conversation of the interlocutors, even the blindest reader may perceive the author's struggling and blundering effort to introduce them. It is rendered quite evident that they were originally "on hand," and that "O'Malley" has been concocted for their introduction. Among other *niaiseries* we observe the silly trick of whetting appetite by delay. The conversation over the "kidneys" is brought, for example, to such a pass that one of the speakers is called upon for a story, which he forthwith declines for any reason, or for none. At a subsequent "broil," he is again pressed and again refuses; and it is not until the reader's patience is fairly exhausted and he has consigned both the story and its author to Hades, that the gentleman in question is prevailed upon to discourse. The only conceivable result of this fanfaronnade is the ruin of the tale when told, through exaggerating anticipation respecting it.

The anecdotes thus narrated being the staple of the book, and the awkward manner of their interlocution having been pointed out, it but remains to be seen what the anecdotes are, in themselves, and what is the merit of their narration. And here, let it not be supposed that we have any design to deprive the devil of his due. There are several very excellent anecdotes in "Charles O'Malley" very cleverly and pungently told. Many of the scenes in which Monsoon figures are rich — less, however, from the scenes themselves than from the piquant, but by no means original character of Monsoon, a drunken, maudlin, dishonest old Major, given to communicativeness and mock morality over his cups and not over careful in detailing adventures which tell against himself. One or two of the college pictures are unquestionably good, but might have been better. In general, the reader is made to feel that fine subjects have fallen into unskilful hands. By way of instancing this assertion, and at the same time of conveying an idea of the tone and character of the stories, we will quote one of the shortest, and assuredly one of the best: —

"'Ah, by-the-by, how's the Major?'

"'Charmingly: only a little bit in a scrape just now. Sir Arthur — Lord Wellington, I mean — had him up for his fellows being caught pillaging, and gave him a devil of a rowing a few days ago.'

"'Very disorderly corps yours, Major O'Shaughnessy,' said the general; 'more men up for punishment than any regiment in the service.'

"Shaugh muttered something, but his voice was lost in a loud cock-a-doo-doo-doo, that some bold chanticleer set up at the moment.

"'If the officers do their duty, Major O'Shaughnessy, these acts of insubordination do not occur.'

"'Cock-a-doo-doo-doo,' was the reply. Some of the staff found it hard not to laugh; but the general went on —

"'If, therefore, the practice does not cease, I'll draft the men into West India regiments.'

"'Cock-a-doo-doo-doo!'

"'And if any articles pillaged from the inhabitants are detected in the quarters, or about the persons of the troops —'

"'Cock-a-doo-doo-*doo!*' screamed louder here than ever.

"'Damn that cock — where is it?'

"There was a general look around on all sides, which seemed in vain; when a tremendous repetition of the cry resounded from O'Shaughnessy's coat-pocket: thus detecting the valiant Major himself in the very practice of his corps. There was no standing this: every one burst out into a peal of laughter; and Lord Wellington himself could not resist, but turned away muttering to himself as he went — 'Damned robbers every man of them,' while a final war-note from the Major's pocket closed the interview."

Now this is an anecdote at which every one will laugh; but its effect might have been vastly heightened by putting a few words of grave morality and reprobation of the conduct of his troops, into the mouth of O'Shaughnessy, upon whose character they would have told well. The cock, in interrupting the thread of his discourse, would thus have afforded an excellent context. We have scarcely a reader, moreover, who will fail to perceive the want of tact shown in dwelling upon the mirth which the anecdote occasioned. The error here is precisely like that of a man's laughing at his own spoken jokes. Our author is uniformly guilty of this mistake. He has an absurd fashion, also, of informing the reader, at the conclusion of each of his anecdotes, that, however good the

anecdote might be, he (the reader) cannot enjoy it to the full extent in default of the manner in which it was orally narrated. He has no business to say anything of the kind. It is his duty to convey the manner not less than the matter of his narratives.

But we may say of these latter that, in general, they have the air of being *remembered* rather than invented. No man who has seen much of the rough life of the camp will fail to recognize among them many very old acquaintances. Some of them are as ancient as the hills, and have been, time out of mind, the common property of the bivouac. They have been narrated orally all the world over. The chief merit of the writer is that he has been the first to collect and to print them. It is observable, in fact, that the second volume of the work is very far inferior to the first. The author seems to have exhausted his whole hoarded store in the beginning. His conclusion is barren indeed, and but for the historical details (for which he has no claim to merit) would be especially prosy and dull. Now the true invention never exhausts itself. It is mere cant and ignorance to talk of the possibility of the really imaginative man's "writing himself out." His soul but derives nourishment from the streams that flow therefrom. As well prate about the aridity of the eternal ocean ἐξ οὗπερ πάντες ποταμοί. So long as the universe of thought shall furnish matter for novel combination, so long will the spirit of true genius be original, be exhaustless — be itself.

A few cursory observations. The book is filled to overflowing with songs of very doubtful excellence, the most of which are put into the mouth of Micky

Free, an amusing Irish servant of O'Malley's and are given as his impromptu effusions. The subject of the improvisos is always the matter in hand at the moment of composition. The author evidently prides himself upon his poetical powers, about which the less we say the better; but if anything were wanting to assure us of his absurd ignorance and inappreciation of Art, we should find the fullest assurance in the mode in which these doggerel verses are introduced.

The occasional sentiment with which the volumes are interspersed there is an absolute necessity for skipping.

Can anybody tell us what is meant by the affectation of the word "*L'Envoy*" which is made the heading of two prefaces?

That portion of the account of the battle of Waterloo which gives O'Malley's experiences while a prisoner and in close juxtaposition to Napoleon, bears evident traces of having been translated, and very literally too, from a French manuscript.

The English of the work is sometimes even amusing. We have continually, for example, *eat*, the present, for *ate*, the perfect — page 17. At page 16 we have this delightful sentence: "Captain Hammersley, however, *never* took further notice of me, but continued to recount, for the amusement of those *about*, several excellent stories of his military career, which I confess were heard with every *test* of delight by all save me." At page 357 we have some sage talk about "the entire of the army;" and at page 368 the accomplished O'Malley speaks of "*drawing* a last look upon his sweetheart." These things arrest our

attention as we open the book at random. It abounds in them, and in vulgarisms even much worse than they.

But why speak of vulgarisms of language? There is a disgusting vulgarism of thought which pervades and contaminates this whole production, and from which a delicate or lofty mind will shrink as from a pestilence. Not the least repulsive manifestation of this leprosy is to be found in the author's blind and grovelling worship of mere rank. Of the Prince Regent, that filthy compound of all that is bestial, that lazar-house of all moral corruption, he scruples not to speak in terms of the grossest adulation, sneering at Edmund Burke in the same villanous breath in which he extols the talents, the graces, and the *virtues* of George the Fourth! That any man, to-day, can be found so degraded in heart as to style this reprobate "one who, in every feeling of his nature, and in every feature of his deportment, was every inch a prince" — is matter for grave reflection and sorrowful debate. The American, at least, who shall peruse the concluding pages of the book now under review, and not turn in disgust from the base sycophancy which infects them, is unworthy of his country and his name. But the truth is that a gross and contracted soul renders itself unquestionably manifest in almost every line of the composition.

And this — *this* is the *work*, in respect to which its author, aping the airs of intellect, prates about his "haggard cheek," his "sunken eye," his "aching and tired head," his "nights of toil," and (good heavens) his "days of thought!" That the thing is popular we grant — while that we cannot deny the fact,

we grieve. But the career of true taste is onward — and now moves more vigorously onward than ever — and the period, perhaps, is not hopelessly distant, when in decrying the mere balderdash of such matters as "Charles O'Malley" we shall do less violence to the feelings and judgment even of the populace than, we much fear, has been done in this article.

MARRYATT'S "JOSEPH RUSHBROOK"

IT has been well said that "the success of certain works may be traced to sympathy between the author's mediocrity of ideas and mediocrity of ideas on the part of the public." In commenting on this passage, Mrs. Gore, herself a shrewd philosopher, observes that, whether as regards men or books, there exists an excellence too excellent for general favor. To "make a hit," to captivate the public eye, ear, or understanding without a certain degree of merit, is impossible; but the "hardest hit" is seldom made, indeed we may say *never* made, by the highest merit. When we wrote the word "seldom" we were thinking of Dickens and "The Old Curiosity Shop," a work unquestionably of "the highest merit," and which at a first glance appears to have made the most unequivocal of "hits;" but we suddenly remembered that the compositions called "Harry Lorrequer" and "Charles O'Malley" had borne the palm from "The Old Curiosity Shop" in point of what is properly termed *popularity*.

There can be no question, we think, that the philosophy of all this *is* to be found in the apothegm with which we began. Marryatt is a singular instance of its truth. He has always been a very popular writer in the most rigorous sense of the word. His books

are essentially "mediocre." His ideas are the common property of the mob, and have been their common property time out of mind. We look throughout his writings in vain for the slightest indication of originality, for the faintest incentive to thought. His plots, his language, his opinions, are neither adapted nor intended for scrutiny. We must be contented with them as sentiments rather than as ideas; and properly to estimate them, even in this view, we must bring ourselves into a sort of identification with the sentiment of the mass. Works composed in this spirit are sometimes purposely so composed by men of superior intelligence, and here we call to mind the *Chansons* of Béranger. But usually they are the natural exponent of the vulgar thought in the person of a vulgar thinker. In either case they claim for themselves that which, for want of a more definite expression, has been called by critics nationality. Whether this nationality in letters is a fit object for high-minded ambition, we cannot here pause to inquire. If it is, then Captain Marryatt occupies a more desirable position than, in our heart, we are willing to award him.

"Joseph Rushbrook" is not a book with which the critic should occupy many paragraphs. It is not very dissimilar to "Poor Jack," which latter is, perhaps, the best specimen of its author's cast of thought, and national manner, although inferior in interest to "Peter Simple."

The plot can only please those who swallow the probabilities of "Sinbad the Sailor," or "Jack and the Bean-Stalk" — or we should have said, more strictly, the incidents; for of plot, properly speaking, there is none at all.

Joseph Rushbrook is an English soldier who, having long served his country and received a wound in the head, is pensioned and discharged. He becomes a poacher, and educates his son (the hero of the tale, and also named Joseph) to the same profession. A pedler, called Byres, is about to betray the father, who avenges himself by shooting him. The son takes the burden of the crime upon himself, and flees the country. A reward is offered for his apprehension — a reward which one Furness, a schoolmaster, is very anxious to obtain. This Furness dogs the footsteps of our hero, much as Fagin, the Jew, dogs those of Oliver Twist, forcing him to quit place after place, just as he begins to get comfortably settled. In thus roaming about, little Joseph meets with all kinds of outrageously improbable adventures; and not only this, but the reader is bored to death with the outrageously improbable adventures of every one with whom little Joseph comes in contact. Good fortune absolutely besets him. Money falls at his feet wherever he goes, and he has only to stoop and pick it up. At length he arrives at the height of prosperity, and thinks he is entirely rid of Furness, when Furness reappears. That Joseph should, in the end, be brought to trial for the pedler's murder is so clearly the author's design that he who runs may read it, and we naturally suppose that his persecutor, Furness, is to be the instrument of this evil. We suppose also, of course, that in bringing this misfortune upon our hero, the schoolmaster will involve himself in ruin, in accordance with the common ideas of poetical justice. But no; — Furness, being found in the way, is killed off accidentally, having lived and plotted to no ostensible purpose through the better half of the book

Circumstances that have nothing to do with the story involve Joseph in his trial. He refuses to divulge the real secret of the murder, and is sentenced to transportation. The elder Rushbrook, in the mean time, has avoided suspicion and fallen heir to a great property. Just as his son is about to be sent across the water, some of Joe's friends discover the true state of affairs, and obtain from the father, who is now conveniently upon his death-bed, a confession of his guilt. Thus all ends well — if the word "well" can be applied in any sense to trash so ineffable; the father dies, the son is released, inherits the estate, marries his lady-love, and prospers in every possible and impossible way.

We have mentioned the imitation of Fagin. A second plagiarism is feebly attempted in the character of one Nancy, a trull, who is based upon the Nancy of "Oliver Twist" — for Marryatt is not often at the trouble of diversifying his thefts. This Nancy changes her name three or four times, and so in fact do each and all of the *dramatis personæ*. This changing of name is one of the bright ideas with which the author of "Peter Simple" is most pertinaciously afflicted. We would not be bound to say how many aliases are borne by the hero in this instance — some dozen perhaps.

The novels of Marryatt — his later ones at least — are evidently written to order, for certain considerations, and have to be delivered within certain periods. He thus finds it his interest to push on. Now, for this mode of progress, incident is the sole thing which answers. One incident begets another, and so on *ad infinitum*. There is never the slightest necessity for pausing; especially where no plot is to be cared for.

Comment, in the author's own person, upon what is transacting, is left entirely out of question. There is thus none of that binding power perceptible, which often gives a species of unity (the unity of the writer's individual thought) to the most random narrations. All works composed as we have stated Marryatt's to be composed, will be run on, incidentally, in the manner described; and, notwithstanding that it would seem at first sight to be otherwise, yet it is true that no works are so insufferably tedious. These are the novels which we read with a hurry exactly consonant and proportionate with that in which they were indited. We seldom leave them unfinished, yet we labor through to the end, and reach it with unalloyed pleasure.

The commenting force can never be safely disregarded. It is far better to have a dearth of incident, with skilful observations upon it, than the utmost variety of event, without. In some previous review we have observed (and our observation is borne out by analysis) that it was the deep sense of the want of this binding and commenting power in the old Greek drama, which gave rise to the chorus. The chorus came at length to supply, in some measure, a deficiency which is inseparable from dramatic action, and represented the expression of the public interest or sympathy in the matters transacted. The successful novelist must, in the same manner, be careful to bring into view his private interest, sympathy, and opinion, in regard to his own creations.

We have spoken of "The Poacher" at greater length than we intended; for it deserves little more than an announcement. It has the merit of a homely and not unnatural simplicity of style, and is not destitute of pathos: but this is all. Its English is exces-

sively slovenly. Its events are monstrously improbable. There is no adaptation of parts about it. The truth is, it is a pitiable production. There are twenty young men of our acquaintance who make no pretension to literary ability, yet who could produce a better book *in a week*.

BIRD'S "THE HAWKS OF HAWK-HOLLOW" AND "SHEPPARD LEE"

I

BY "The Gladiator," by "Calavar," and by "The Infidel," Dr. Bird has risen, in a comparatively short space of time, to a very enviable reputation; and we have heard it asserted that his novel, "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow," will not fail to place his name in the very first rank of American writers of fiction. Without venturing to subscribe implicitly to this latter supposition, we still think very highly of him who has written "Calavar."

Had this novel reached us some years ago, with the title of "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow: A Romance by the author of Waverley," we should not perhaps have engaged in its perusal with as much genuine eagerness, or with so dogged a determination to be pleased with it at all events, as we have actually done upon receiving it with its proper title, and under really existing circumstances. But having read the book *through*, as undoubtedly we should have done, if only for the sake of Auld Lang Syne, and for the sake of certain pleasantly mirthful, or pleasantly mournful recollections connected with "Ivanhoe," with the "Antiquary," with "Kenilworth," and above all, with that most pure, perfect, and radiant gem of fictitious literature, the "Bride of Lammermoor" — having, we

say, on this account, and for the sake of these recollections, read the novel from beginning to end, from Aleph to Tau, we should have pronounced our opinion of its merits somewhat in the following manner.

"It is unnecessary to tell us that this novel is written by Sir Walter Scott; and we are really glad to find that he has at length ventured to turn his attention to American incidents, scenery, and manners. We repeat that it was a mere act of supererogation to place the words 'By the author of "Waverley"' in the titlepage. The book speaks for itself. The style vulgarly so called — the manner properly so called — the handling of the subject, to speak pictorially, or graphically, or as a German would say, plastically — in a word, the general air, the *tout ensemble*, the prevailing character of the story, all proclaim, in words which one who runs may read, that these volumes were indited 'By the author of "Waverley."'" Having said thus much, we should resume our *critique* as follows: "'The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow' is, however, by no means in the *best* manner of its illustrious author. To speak plainly, it is a positive failure, and must take its place by the side of the 'Redgauntlets,' the 'Monasteries,' the 'Pirates,' and the 'Saint Ronan's Wells.'"

All this we should perhaps have been induced to say had the book been offered to us for perusal some few years ago, with the supposititious title, and under the supposititious circumstances aforesaid. But alas! for our critical independency, the case is very different indeed. There can be no mistake or misconception in the present instance, such as we have so fancifully imagined. The titlepage (here we have it) is clear, explanatory, and not to be misunderstood. "The Hawks of Hawks-Hollow, A Tradition of

Pennsylvania" — that is to say, a novel — is written, so we are assured, not by the author of "Waverley," but by the author of that very fine romance "Calavar" — not by Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, but by Robert M. Bird, M. D. Now Robert M. Bird is an American.

In regard to that purely mechanical portion of this novel, which it would now be fashionable to denominate its *style*, we have very few observations to make. In general it is faultless. Occasionally we meet with a sentence ill-constructed, an inartificial adaptation of the end to the beginning of a paragraph, a circumlocutory mode of saying what might have been better said, if said with brevity; now and then with a pleonasm, as, for example —"And if he wore a mask in his commerce with men, it was like that *iron* one of the Bastile, which when put on, was put on for life, and was at the same time *of iron;*" not unfrequently with a bull proper, videlicet — "As he spoke there came into the den, eight men attired like the two first *who were included in the number.*" But we repeat that upon the whole the style of the novel — if that may be called its style, which style is not — is at least *equal* to that of any American writer whatsoever. In the style *properly* so called — that is to say, in the prevailing tone and manner which give character and individuality to the book, we cannot bring ourselves to think that Dr. Bird has been equally fortunate. His subject appears always ready to fly away from him. He dallies with it continually — hovers incessantly round it, and about it — and not until driven to exertion by the necessity of bringing his volumes to a close, does he finally grasp it with any appearance of energy or good-will. "The Hawks

of Hawk-Hollow" is composed with great inequality of manner — at times forcible and manly — at times sinking into the merest childishness and imbecility. Some portions of the book, we surmise, were either not written by Dr. Bird, or were written by him in moments of the most utter mental exhaustion. On the other hand, the reader will not be disappointed, if he looks to find in the novel many — very many well-sustained passages of great eloquence and beauty.

"The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow," if it add a single bay to the already green wreath of Dr. Bird's *popular* reputation, will not, at all events, among men whose decisions are entitled to consideration, advance the high opinion previously entertained of his abilities. It has no pretensions to *originality* of manner, or of style — for we insist upon the distinction — and very few to originality of matter. It is, in many respects, a bad imitation of Sir Walter Scott. Some of its characters, and one or two of its incidents, have seldom been surpassed, for force, fidelity to nature, and power of exciting interest in the reader. It is altogether more worthy of its author in its scenes of hurry, of tumult, and confusion, than in those of a more quiet and philosophical nature. Like "Calavar" and "The Infidel," it excels in the drama of action and passion, and fails in the drama of colloquy. It is inferior, as a whole, to "The Infidel," and vastly inferior to "Calavar."

II

We must regard "Sheppard Lee," upon the whole, as a very clever, and not altogether unoriginal, *jeu d'esprit.* Its incidents are well conceived, and related

with force, brevity, and a species of *directness* which is invaluable in certain cases of narration — while in others it should be avoided. The language is exceedingly unaffected and (what we regard as high praise) exceedingly well adapted to the varying subjects. Some fault may be found with the conception of the metempsychosis which is the basis of the narrative. There are two general methods of telling stories such as this. One of these methods is that adopted by the author of "Sheppard Lee." He conceives his hero endowed with some idiosyncrasy beyond the common lot of human nature, and thus introduces him to a series of adventures which, under ordinary circumstances, could occur only to a plurality of persons. The chief source of interest in such narrative is, or should be, the contrasting of these varied events, in their influence upon a character *unchanging* — except as changed by the events themselves. This fruitful field of interest, however, is neglected in the novel before us, where the hero, very awkwardly, partially loses, and partially does not lose, his identity, at each transmigration. The sole object here in the various metempsychoses seems to be, merely the depicting of seven different conditions of existence, and the enforcement of the very doubtful moral that every person should remain contented with his own. But it is clear that both these points could have been more forcibly shown, without any reference to a confused and jarring system of transmigration, by the mere narrations of seven different individuals. All deviations, especially wide ones, from nature, should be justified to the author by some specific object; the object, in the present case, might have been found, as above mentioned, in the opportunity

afforded of depicting widely different conditions of existence actuating *one* individual.

A second peculiarity of the species of novel to which "Sheppard Lee" belongs, and a peculiarity which is *not* rejected by the author, is the treating the whole narrative in a jocular manner throughout (inasmuch as to say "I know I am writing nonsense, but then you must excuse me for the very reason that I know it"), or the solution of the various absurdities by means of a dream, or something similar. The latter method is adopted in the present instance — and the idea is managed with unusual ingenuity. Still — having read through the whole book, and having been worried to death with incongruities (allowing such to exist) until the concluding page, it is certainly little indemnification for our sufferings to learn that, in truth, the whole matter was a dream, and that we were very wrong in being worried about it at all. The damage is done, and the apology does not remedy the grievance. For this and other reasons, we are led to prefer, in this kind of writing, the *second* general method to which we have alluded. It consists in a variety of points: — principally in avoiding, as may easily be done, that *directness* of expression which we have noticed in "Sheppard Lee," and thus leaving much to the imagination; in writing as if the author were firmly impressed with the truth, yet astonished at the immensity of the wonders he relates, and for which, professedly, he neither claims nor anticipates credence; in minuteness of detail, especially upon points which have no immediate bearing upon the general story — this minuteness not being at variance with indirectness of expression; in short, by making use of the infinity of arts which give veri-

similitude to a narration, and by leaving the result as a wonder not to be accounted for. It will be found that *bizarreries* thus conducted, are usually far more effective than those otherwise managed. The attention of the author, who does not depend upon explaining away his incredibilities, is directed to giving them the character and the luminousness of truth, and thus are brought about, unwittingly, some of the most vivid creations of human intellect. The reader, too, readily perceives and falls in with the writer's humor, and suffers himself to be borne on thereby. On the other hand, what difficulty, or inconvenience, or danger can there be in leaving us uninformed of the important facts that a certain hero *did not* actually discover the *elixir vitæ*, *could not* really make himself really invisible, and *was not* either a ghost in good earnest, or a *bona fide* wandering Jew?

SIMMS'S "THE WIGWAM AND THE CABIN"

MR. SIMMS, we believe, made his first, or nearly his first, appearance before an American audience with a small volume entitled "Martin Faber," an amplification of a much shorter fiction. He had some difficulty in getting it published, but the Harpers finally undertook it, and it did credit to their judgment. It was well received both by the public and the more discriminative few, although some of the critics objected that the story was an imitation of "Miserrimus," a very powerful fiction by the author of "Pickwick Abroad." The original tale, however — the germ of "Martin Faber" — was written long before the publication of "Miserrimus." But independently of this fact, there is not the slightest ground for the charge of imitation. The thesis and incidents of the two works are totally dissimilar; the idea of resemblance arises only from the absolute identity of *effect* wrought by both.

"Martin Faber" was succeeded, at short intervals, by a great number and variety of fictions, some brief, but many of the ordinary novel size. Among these we may notice "Guy Rivers," "The Partisan," "The Yemassee," "Mellichampe," "Beauchampe," and "Richard Hurdis." The last two were issued anony-

mously, the author wishing to ascertain whether the success of his books (which was great) had anything to do with his mere name as the writer of previous works. The result proved that popularity, in Mr. Simms's case, arose solely from intrinsic merit, for "Beauchampe" and "Richard Hurdis" were the most popular of his fictions, and excited very general attention and curiosity. "Border Beagles" was another of his anonymous novels, published with the same end in view, and, although disfigured by some instances of bad taste, was even more successful than "Richard Hurdis."

The "bad taste" of the "Border Beagles" was more particularly apparent in "The Partisan," "The Yemassee," and one or two other of the author's earlier works, and displayed itself most offensively in a certain fondness for the purely disgusting or repulsive, where the intention was or should have been merely the horrible. The writer evinced a strange propensity for minute details of human and brute suffering, and even indulged at times in more unequivocal obscenities. His English, too, was, in his efforts, exceedingly objectionable — verbose, involute, and not unfrequently ungrammatical. He was especially given to pet words, of which we remember at present only "hug," "coil," and the compound "old-time," and introduced them upon all occasions. Neither was he at this period particularly dexterous in the conduct of his stories. His improvement, however, was rapid at all these points, although, on the two first counts of our indictment, there is still abundant room for improvement. But whatever may have been his early defects, or whatever are his present errors, there can be no doubt that from the very beginning he gave evidence

of genius, and that of no common order. His "Martin Faber," in our opinion, is a more forcible story than its supposed prototype, "Miserrimus." The difference in the American reception of the two is to be referred to the fact (we blush while recording it) that "Miserrimus" was understood to be the work of an Englishman, and "Martin Faber" was known to be the composition of an American as yet unaccredited in our Republic of Letters. The fiction of Mr. Simms gave indication, we repeat, of genius, and that of no common order. Had he been even a Yankee, this genius would have been rendered immediately manifest to his countrymen, but unhappily (*perhaps*) he was a Southerner, and united the Southern pride, the Southern dislike to the making of bargains, with the Southern supineness and general want of tact in all matters relating to the making of money. His book, therefore, depended entirely upon its own intrinsic value and resources, but with these it made its way in the end. The "intrinsic value" consisted first of a very vigorous imagination in the conception of the story; secondly, in artistic skill manifested in its conduct; thirdly, in general vigor, life, movement — the whole resulting in deep interest on the part of the reader. These high qualities Mr. Simms has carried with him in his subsequent books; and they are qualities which, above all others, the fresh and vigorous intellect of America should and does esteem. It may be said, upon the whole, that while there are several of our native writers who excel the author of "Martin Faber" at particular *points*, there is, nevertheless, not one who surpasses him in the aggregate of the higher excellences of fiction. We confidently expect him to do much for the lighter literature of his country.

The volume now before us has a title which may mislead the reader. "The Wigwam and the Cabin" is merely a generic phrase, intended to designate the subject-matter of a series of short tales, most of which have first seen the light in the Annuals. "The material employed," says the author, "will be found to illustrate, in large degree, the border history of the South. I can speak with confidence of the general truthfulness of its treatment. The life of the planter, the squatter, the Indian, the negro, the bold and hardy pioneer, and the vigorous yeoman — these are the subjects. In their delineation I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and, in frequent instances, from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of men."

All the tales in this collection have merit, and the first has merit of a very peculiar kind. "Grayling, or Murder will Out," is the title. The story was well received in England, but on this fact no opinion can be safely based. The "Athenæum," we believe, or some other of the London weekly critical journals, having its attention called (no doubt through personal influence) to Carey and Hart's beautiful annual "The Gift," found it convenient, in the course of its notice, to speak at length of some one particular article, and "Murder Will Out" probably arrested the attention of the sub-editor who was employed in so trivial a task as the patting on the head an American book — arrested his attention first from its title (murder being a taking theme with the cockney), and secondly, from its details of Southern forest scenery. Large quotations were made, as a matter of course, and very ample commendation bestowed — the whole criticism proving nothing, in our opinion, but that the critic

had not read a single syllable of the story. The *critique*, however, had at least the good effect of calling American attention to the fact that an American might possibly do a decent thing (provided the possibility were first admitted by the British sub-editors), and the result was, first, that many persons read, and secondly, that all persons admired, the "excellent story in 'The Gift' that had actually been called 'readable' by one of the English newspapers."

Now had "Murder Will Out" been a much worse story than was ever written by Professor Ingraham, still, under the circumstances, we patriotic and independent Americans would have declared it inimitable; but, by some species of odd accident, it happened to deserve all that the British "sub-sub" had condescended to say of it, on the strength of a guess as to what it was all about. It is really an admirable tale, nobly conceived, and skilfully carried into execution — the best ghost-story ever written *by an American* — for we presume that this is the ultimate extent of commendation to which we, as an humble American, dare go.

The other stories of the volume do credit to the author's abilities, and display their peculiarities in a strong light, but there is no one of them so good as "Murder Will Out."

HENRY COCKTON'S "STANLEY THORN"

"CHARLES O'MALLEY," "Harry Lorrequer," "Valentine Vox," "Stanley Thorn," and some other effusions, are novels depending for effect upon what gave popularity to "Peregrine Pickle" — we mean *practical joke*. To men whose animal spirits are high, whatever may be their mental ability, such works are always acceptable. To the uneducated, to those who read little, to the obtuse in intellect (and these three classes constitute the mass), these books are not only acceptable, but are the only ones which can be called so. We here make two divisions — that of the men who *can* think but who dislike thinking; and that of the men who either have not been presented with the materials for thought, or who have no brains with which to "work up" the material. With these classes of people "Stanley Thorn" is a favorite. It not only demands no reflection, but repels it or dissipates it, much as a silver rattle the wrath of a child. It is not in the least degree suggestive. Its readers arise from its perusal with the identical idea in possession at sitting down. Yet, during perusal, there has been a tingling physico-mental exhilaration, somewhat like that induced by a cold bath, or a flesh-brush, or a gallop on horseback — a very delightful and very healthful matter in its way.

But these things are not *letters*. "Valentine Vox" and "Charles O'Malley" are no more *literature* than cat-gut is music. The visible and tangible tricks of a baboon belong not less to the belles-lettres than does "Harry Lorrequer." When this gentleman adorns his countenance with lamp-black, knocks over an apple-woman, or brings about a rent in his pantaloons, we laugh at him when bound up in a volume just as we would laugh at his adventures if happening before our eyes in the street. But mere incidents, whether serious or comic, whether occurring or described — *mere incidents* are not books. Neither are they the basis of books — of which the idiosyncrasy is thought in contradistinction from deed. A book without action cannot be; but a book is only such, to the extent of its thought, independently of its deed. Thus of Algebra; which is, or should be, defined as "a mode of computing with symbols by means of signs." With numbers, as Algebra, it has nothing to do; and although no algebraic computation can proceed without numbers, yet Algebra is only such to the extent of its analysis, independently of its Arithmetic.

We do not mean to find fault with the class of performances of which "Stanley Thorn" is one. Whatever tends to the amusement of man tends to his benefit. Aristotle, with singular assurance, has declared poetry the most philosophical of all writing, (*σπουδαιότατον καὶ φιλοσοφώτατον γένος*) defending it principally upon that score. He seems to think, and many following him have thought, that the end of all literature should be instruction — a favorite dogma of the school of Wordsworth. But it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness. If so, the end of every separate aim of our existence, of everything

connected with our existence, should be still — happiness. Therefore, the end of instruction should be happiness; and happiness — what is it but the extent or duration of pleasure? therefore, the end of instruction should be pleasure. But the cant of the Lakists would establish the exact converse, and make the end of all pleasure instruction. In fact, *ceteris paribus*, he who pleases is of more importance to his fellow-man than he who instructs, since the *dulce* is alone the *utile*, and pleasure is the end already attained, which instruction is merely the means of attaining. It will be said that Wordsworth, with Aristotle, has reference to instruction with eternity in view; but either such cannot be the tendency of his argument, or he is laboring at a sad disadvantage; for his works — or at least those of his school — are professedly to be understood by the few, and it is the many who stand in need of salvation. Thus the moralist's parade of measures would be as completely thrown away as are those of the devil in "Melmoth," who plots and counterplots through three octavo volumes for the entrapment of one or two souls, while any common devil would have demolished one or two thousand.

When, therefore, we assert that these practical-joke publications are not "literature," because not "thoughtful" in any degree, we must not be understood as objecting to the thing in itself but to its claims upon our attention as critic. Dr. — what is his name? — strings together a number of facts or fancies which, when printed, answer the laudable purpose of amusing a very large, if not a very respectable number of people. To this proceeding upon the part of the Doctor, or on the part of his imitator, Mr. Jeremy Stockton, the author of "Valentine Vox," we

can have no objection whatever. His books do not please us. We will not read them. Still less shall we speak of them seriously as books. Being in no respect works of art, they neither deserve nor are amenable to criticism.

"Stanley Thorn" may be described, in brief, as a collection, rather than as a series, of practical haps and mishaps, befalling a young man very badly brought up by his mother. He flogs his father with a codfish, and does other similar things. We have no fault to find with him whatever, except that, in the end, he does not come to the gallows.

We have no great fault to find with him, but with Mr. Bockton, his father, much. He is a consummate plagiarist; and, in our opinion, nothing more despicable exists. There is not a good incident in his book (?) of which we cannot point out the paternity with at least a sufficient precision. The opening adventures are all in the style of "Cyril Thornton." Bob, following Amelia in disguise, is borrowed from one of the Smollett or Fielding novels — there are many of our readers who will be able to say which. The cab driven over the Crescent *trottoir*, is from Pierce Egan. The swindling tricks of Colonel Somebody, at the commencement of the novel, and of Captain Filcher afterwards, are from "Pickwick Abroad." The doings at Madame Pompour's (or some such name) with the description of Isabelle, are from "Écarté, or the Salons of Paris" — a *rich* book. The Sons-of-Glory scene (or its wraith) we have seen — somewhere; while (not to be tedious) the whole account of Stanley's election, from his first conception of the design, through the entire canvass, the purchasing of the "Independents," the row at the

hustings, the chairing, the feast, and the petition, is so obviously stolen from "Ten Thousand a Year," as to be disgusting. Bob and the "old venerable" — what are they but feeble reflections of young and old Weller? The tone of the narration throughout is an absurd echo of Boz. For example — "'We 've come agin about them there little accounts of ourn — question is do you mean to settle 'em or don't you?' His colleagues, by whom he was backed, highly approved of this question, and winked and nodded with the view of intimating to each other that in their judgment that was the point." Who so dull as to give Mr. Bogton any more credit for these things than we give the buffoon for the *rôle* which he has committed to memory? That the work will prove amusing to many readers we do not pretend to deny; the claims of Mr. Frogton, and not of his narrative, are what we especially discuss.

"PETER SNOOK"

IN a late number of the "Democratic Review" there appeared a very excellent paper (by Mr. Duyckinck) on the subject of Magazine Literature — a subject much less thoroughly comprehended here than either in France or in England. In America we compose, now and then, agreeable essays and other matters of that character; but we have not yet caught the true Magazine spirit — a thing neither to be defined nor described. Mr. Duyckinck's article, although piquant, is not altogether to our mind. We think he places too low an estimate on the capability of the Magazine paper. He is inclined to undervalue its power; to limit unnecessarily its province, which is illimitable. In fact, it is in the extent of subject, and not less in the extent or variety of *tone*, that the French and English surpass us to so good a purpose. How very rarely are we struck with an American Magazine article as with an absolute novelty; how frequently the foreign articles so affect us! We are so circumstanced as to be unable to *pay* for elaborate compositions; and, after all, the true invention is elaborate. There is no greater mistake than the supposition that a true originality is a mere matter of impulse or inspiration. To originate is carefully, patiently, and understandingly to combine. The few American Magazinists who ever think of this elabora-

tion at all cannot afford to carry it into practice for the paltry prices offered them by our periodical publishers. For this and other glaring reasons, we are behind the age in a very important branch of literature; a branch which, moreover, is daily growing in importance; and which, in the end (not far distant), will be the *most* influential of all the departments of Letters.

We are lamentably deficient, not only in invention proper, but in that which is, more strictly, *art*. What American, for instance, in penning a criticism, ever supposes himself called upon to present his readers with more than the exact stipulation of his title — to present them with a criticism, and *something beyond?* Who thinks of making his critique a work of art in itself, independently of its critical opinions; a work of art, such as are all the more elaborate and most effective reviews of Macaulay? Yet these reviews we have evinced no incapacity to appreciate, when presented. The best American review ever penned is miserably ineffective when compared with the notice of Montagu's "Bacon"; and yet this latter is, in general, a piece of tawdry sophistry, owing everything to a consummate, to an exquisite arrangement, to a thorough and just sufficiently comprehensive diffuseness, to a masterly *climaxing* of points, to a style which dazzles the understanding with its brilliancy, but not more than it misleads it by its perspicuity — causing us so distinctly to comprehend that we fancy we coincide: in a word, to the perfection of art — of all the art which a Macaulay can wield, or which is applicable to any criticism that a Macaulay could write.

It is, however, in the composition of that class of Magazine papers which come properly under the head

of *Tales*, that we evince the most remarkable deficiency in skill. If we except, first, Mr. Hawthorne — secondly, Mr. Simms — thirdly, Mr. Willis — and fourthly, one or two others whom we may as well put mentally together without naming them — there is not even a respectably skilful tale-writer on this side the Atlantic. We have seen, to be sure, many very well-constructed stories, individual specimens, the work of American Magazinists; but these specimens have invariably appeared to be happy accidents of construction; their authors, in subsequent tales, having always evinced an incapacity to construct.

We have been led to a comparison of the American with the British ability in tale-writing by a perusal of some Magazine papers, the composition of the author of "Chartley" and "The Invisible Gentleman." He is one of the best of the English journalists, and has some of the happiest peculiarities of Dickens, whom he preceded in the popular favor. The longest and best of his tales, properly so called, is "Peter Snook," and this presents so many striking points for the consideration of the Magazinist that we feel disposed to give an account of it in full.

Peter Snook, the hero, and the *beau idéal* of a Cockney, is a retail linen-draper in Bishopgate Street. He is, of course, a stupid and conceited, although, at bottom, a very good little fellow, and "always looks as if he was frightened." Matters go on very thrivingly with him until he becomes acquainted with Miss Clarinda Bodkin, "a young lady, owning to almost thirty, and withal a great proficient in the mysteries of millinery and mantua-making." Love and ambition, however, set the little gentleman somewhat be-

side himself. "If Miss Clarinda would but have me," says he, "we might divide the shop, and have a linen-drapery side, and a haberdashery and millinery side, and one would help the other. There 'd be only one rent to pay, and a double business — and it would be so comfortable, too!" Thinking thus, Peter commences a flirtation, to which Miss Clarinda but doubtfully responds. He escorts the lady to White Conduit House, Bagnigge Wells, and other genteel places of public resort, — and, finally, is so rash as to accede to the proposition, on her part, of a trip to Margate. At this epoch of the narrative, the writer observes that the subsequent proceedings of the hero are gathered from accounts rendered by himself, when called upon, after the trip, for explanation.

It is agreed that Miss Clarinda shall set out alone for Margate — Mr. Snook following her, after some indispensable arrangements. These occupy him until the middle of July, at which period, taking passage in the "Rose in June," he safely reaches his destination. But various misfortunes here await him, misfortunes admirably adapted to the meridian of Cockney feeling and the capacity of Cockney endurance. His umbrella, for example, and a large brown paper parcel, containing a new pea-green coat and flower-patterned embroidered silk waistcoat, are tumbled into the water at the landing-place, and Miss Bodkin forbids him her presence in his old clothes. By a tumble of his own, too, the skin is rubbed from both his shins for several inches, and the surgeon, having no regard to the lover's cotillion engagements, enjoins on him a total abstinence from dancing. A cock-chafer, moreover, is at the trouble of flying into one of his eyes, and (worse than all) a tall military-looking shoemaker,

Mr. Last, has taken advantage of the linen-draper's delay in reaching Margate, to ingratiate himself with his mistress. Finally, he is cut by Last, and rejected by the lady, and has nothing left for it but to secure a homeward passage in the "Rose in June."

In the evening of the second day after his departure, the vessel drops anchor off Greenwich. Most of the passengers go ashore, with the view of taking the stage to the city. Peter, however, who considers that he has already spent money enough to no purpose, prefers remaining on board. "We shall get to Billingsgate," says he, "while I am sleeping, and I shall have plenty of time to go home and dress, and go into the city and borrow the trifle I may want for Pester and Company's bill, that comes due the day after to-morrow." This determination is a source of much trouble to our hero, as will be seen in the sequel. Some shopmen who remain with him in the packet tempt him to unusual indulgences, in the way, first, of brown stout, and, secondly, of positive French brandy. The consequence is, that Mr. Snook falls, thirdly, asleep, and, fourthly, overboard.

About dawn on the morning after this event, Ephraim Hobson, the confidential clerk and factotum of Mr. Peter Snook, is disturbed from a sound sleep by the sudden appearance of his master. That gentleman seems to be quite in a bustle, and delights Ephraim with an account of a whacking wholesale order for exportation just received. "Not a word to anybody about the matter!" exclaims Peter, with unusual emphasis. "It 's such an opportunity as don't come often in a man's lifetime. There 's a captain of a ship — he 's the owner of her, too; but never mind! there an't time to enter into particulars

now, but you 'll know all by and by — all you have to do is to do as I tell you — so, come along!"

Setting Ephraim to work, with directions to pack up immediately all the goods in the shop with the exception of a few trifling articles, the master avows his intention of going into the city "to borrow enough money to make up Pester's bill, due to-morrow." "I don't think you 'll want much, Sir," replied Mr. Hobson with a self-complacent air. "I 've been looking up the long-winded 'uns, you see, since you 've been gone, and I 've got Shy's money and Slack's account, which we 'd pretty well given up for a bad job, and one or two more. There, — there 's the list — and there 's the key to the strong box, where you 'll find the money, besides what I 've took at the counter." Peter at this seems well pleased, and shortly afterwards goes out, saying he cannot tell when he 'll be back, and giving directions that whatever goods may be sent in during his absence shall be left untouched till his return.

It appears that, after leaving his shop, Mr. Snook proceeded to that of Jobb, Flashbill and Co. (one of whose clerks, on board the "Rose in June," had been very liberal in supplying our hero with brandy on the night of his ducking), looked over a large quantity of ducks and other goods, and finally made purchase of "a choice assortment" to be delivered the same day. His next visit was to Mr. Bluff, the managing partner in the banking-house where he usually kept his cash. His business now was to request permission to overdraw a hundred pounds for a few days.

"'Humph,' said Mr. Bluff, 'money is very scarce; but — Bless me! — yes — it 's he! Excuse me a minute, Mr. Snook, there 's a gentleman at the front counter whom I

want particularly to speak to — I 'll be back with you directly.' As he uttered these words, he rushed out, and, in passing one of the clerks on his way forward, he whispered, 'Tell Scribe to look at Snook's account, and let me know directly.' He then went to the front counter, where several people were waiting to pay and receive money. 'Fine weather this, Mr. Butt. What! you 're not out of town like the rest of them?'

"'No,' replied Mr. Butt, who kept a thriving gin-shop, 'no, I sticks to my business — make hay while the sun shines — that 's my maxim. Wife up at night — I up early in the morning.'

"The banker chatted and listened with great apparent interest, till the closing of a huge book on which he kept his eye told him that his whispered order had been attended to. He then took a gracious leave of Mr. Butt, and returned back to the counting-house with a slip of paper, adroitly put in his hand while passing, on which was written, 'Peter Snook, Linen Draper, Bishopgate Street — old account — increasing gradually — balance: £153 15*s.* 6*d.* — *very* regular.' 'Sorry to keep you waiting, Mr. Snook,' said he, 'but we must catch people when we can. Well, what is it you were saying you wanted us to do?'

"'I should like to be able to overdraw just for a few days,' replied Peter.

"'How much?'

"'A hundred.'

"'Won't fifty do?'

"'No, not quite, sir.'

"'Well, you 're an honest fellow, and don't come bothering us often; so, I suppose we must not be too particular with you for this once.'"

Leaving Bluff, Mr. Snook hurries to overtake Mr. Butt, the dealer in spirits, who had just left the banking-house before himself, and to give that gentleman an order for a hogshead of the best gin. As he is

personally unknown to Mr. Butt, he hands him a card, on which is written, "Peter Snook, linen and muslin warehouse, No. — Bishopgate Street, within," etc. etc., and takes occasion to mention that he purchases at the recommendation of Mr. Bluff. The gin is to be at Queenhithe the same evening. The spirit-dealer, as soon as his new customer has taken leave, revolves in his mind the oddity of a linen-draper's buying a hogshead of gin, and determines to satisfy himself of Mr. Snook's responsibility by a personal application to Mr. Bluff. On reaching the bank, however, he is told by the clerks that Mr. Bluff, being in attendance upon a committee of the House of Commons, will not be home in any reasonable time — but also that Peter Snook is a perfectly safe man. The gin is accordingly sent; and several other large orders for different goods, upon other houses, are promptly fulfilled in the same manner. Meantime Ephraim is busily engaged at home in receiving and inspecting the invoices of the various purchases as they arrive, at which employment he is occupied until dusk, when his master makes his appearance in unusually high spirits. We must here be pardoned for copying some passages: —

"'Well, Ephraim,' he exclaimed, 'this looks something like business. You have n't had such a job this many a day! Shop looks well now, eh?'

"'You know best, sir,' replied Hobson. 'But hang me if I an't frightened. When we shall sell all these goods, I'm sure I can't think. You talked of having a haberdashery side to the shop; but if we go on at this rate, we shall want another side for ourselves; I'm sure I don't know where Miss Bodkin is to be put.'

"'She go to Jericho!' said Peter, contemptuously. 'As

for the goods, my boy, they 'll be gone before to-morrow morning. All you and I have got to do is to pack 'em up; so, let us turn to, and strap at it.'

"Packing was Ephraim's favorite employment, but on the present occasion he set to work with a heavy heart. His master, on the contrary, appeared full of life and spirits, and corded boxes, sewed up trusses, and packed huge paper parcels with a celerity and an adroitness truly wonderful.

"'Why, you don't get on, Hobson,' he exclaimed; 'see what I 've done! Where 's the ink-pot? — oh, here it is!' and he proceeded to mark his packages with his initials and the letter G below. 'There,' he resumed, 'P. S. G.; that 's for me, at Gravesend. I 'm to meet the Captain and owner there, show the goods — if there 's any he don't like, shall bring 'em back with me; get bills — bankers' acceptances for the rest; see 'em safe on board; *then* — but *not before*, mind that, Master Ephraim! No, no, keep my weather eye open, as the men say on board the "Rose in June." By the bye, I have n't told you yet about my falling overboard, whap into the river.'

"'Falling overboard!' exclaimed the astonished shopman, quitting his occupation to stand erect and listen.

"'Ay, ay,' continued Peter — 'see it won't do to tell you long stories *now*. There — mark that truss, will you? Know all about it some day. Lucky job, though — tell you that: got this thundering order by it. Had one tumble, first, going off, at Margate. Spoilt my pea-green — never mind — that was a lucky tumble, too. Had n't been for that, should n't so soon have found out the game a certain person was playing with me. She go to Jericho!'

"But for the frequent repetition of this favorite expression, Ephraim Hobson has since declared he should have doubted his master's identity during the whole of that evening, as there was something very singular about him, and his strength and activity in moving the bales, boxes, and trusses were such as he had never previously exhibited.

The phrase condemning this, that, or the other thing or person to 'go to Jericho,' was the only expression that he uttered, as the shopman said, 'naturally,' and Peter repeated that whimsical anathema as often as usual."

The goods being all packed up, carts arrive to carry them away; and by half-past ten o'clock the shop is entirely cleared, with the exception of some trifling articles to make show on the shelves and counters. Two hackney coaches are called. Mr. Peter Snook gets into one with a variety of loose articles, which would require too much time to pack, and his shopman into another with some more. Arriving at Queenhithe, they find all the goods, previously sent, already embarked in the hold of a long-decked barge which lies near the shore. Mr. Snook now insists upon Ephraim's going on board and taking supper and some hot rum and water. This advice he follows to so good purpose that he is, at length, completely bewildered, when his master, taking him up in his arms, carries him on shore, and there, setting him down, leaves him to make the best of his way home as he can.

About eight, the next morning, Ephraim, awaking of course in a sad condition both of body and mind, sets himself immediately about arranging the appearance of the shop, "so as to secure the credit of the concern." In spite of all his ingenuity, however, it maintains a poverty-stricken appearance, — which circumstance excites some most unreasonable suspicions in the mind of Mr. Bluff's clerk, upon his calling at ten, with Pester and Co.'s bill (three hundred and sixteen pounds, seventeen shillings), and receiving, by way of payment, a check upon his own banking-house for the amount — Mr. Snook having written this check

before his departure with the goods, and left it with Ephraim. On reaching the bank, therefore, the clerk inquires if Peter Snook's check is good for three hundred and sixteen pounds odd, and is told that it is not worth a farthing, Mr. S—— having overdrawn for a hundred. While Mr. Bluff and his assistants are conversing on this subject, Butt, the gin-dealer, calls to thank the banker for having recommended him a customer — which the banker denies having done. An explanation ensues, and "stop thief!" is the cry. Ephraim is sent for, and reluctantly made to tell all he knows of his master's proceedings on the day before, by which means a knowledge is obtained of the other houses who (it is supposed) have been swindled. Getting a description of the barge which conveyed the goods from Queenhithe, the whole party of the creditors now set off in pursuit.

About dawn, the next morning, they overtake the barge, a little below Gravesend — when four men are observed leaving her, and rowing to the shore in a skiff. Peter Snook is found sitting quietly in the cabin, and, although apparently a little surprised at seeing Mr. Pester, betrays nothing like embarrassment or fear.

"'Ah, Mr. Pester! is it you? Glad to see you, sir! So you 've been taking a trip out o' town, and are going back with us? We shall get to Billingsgate between eight and nine, they say; and I hope it won't be later, as I 've a bill of yours comes due to-day, and I want to be at home in time to write a check for it.'"

The goods are also found on board, together with three men in the hold, gagged, and tied hand and foot. They give a strange account of themselves.

Being in the employ of Mr. Heaviside, a lighterman, they were put in charge of the "Flitter," when she was hired by Peter Snook for a trip to Gravesend. According to their orders, they took the barge in the first instance to a wharf, near Queenhithe, and helped to load her with some goods brought down in carts. Mr. Snook, afterwards, came on board, bringing with him two fierce-looking men, and "a little man with a hooked nose" (Ephraim). Mr. S—— and the little man then "had a sort of jollification" in the cabin, till the latter got drunk and was carried ashore. They then proceeded down the river, nothing particular occurring till they had passed Greenwich Hospital, when Mr. S—— ordered them to lay the barge alongside a large black-sided ship. No sooner was the order obeyed than they were boarded by a number of men from said ship, who seized them, bound them, gagged them, and put them in the hold.

The immediate consequence of this information is that Peter is bound, gagged, and put down into the hold in the same manner, by way of retaliation, and for safe-keeping on his way back to the city. On the arrival of the party, a meeting of the creditors is called. Peter appears before them in a great rage, and with the air of an injured man. Indeed, his behavior is so *mal à propos* to his situation as entirely to puzzle his interrogators. He accuses the whole party of a conspiracy.

"'Peter Snook,' said Mr. Pester, solemnly, from the chair, 'that look does not become you after what has passed. Let me advise you to conduct yourself with propriety. You will find that the best policy, depend on 't.'

"'A pretty thing for you, for to come to talk of propriety!' exclaimed Peter; 'you, that seed me laid hold on by

a set of ruffians, and never said a word, nor given information a'terwards! And here have I been kept away from business I don't know how long, and shut up like a dog in a kennel; but I look upon 't you were at the bottom of it all — you and that fellow with the plum-pudding face, as blowed me up about a cask of gin! What you both mean by it I can't think; but, if there 's any law in the land, I 'll make you remember it, both of you — that 's what I will!'"

Mr. Snook swears that he never saw Jobb in his life, except on the occasion of his capture in "The Flitter," and positively denies having looked out any parcel of goods at the house of Jobb, Flashbill and Co. With the banker, Mr. Bluff, he acknowledges an acquaintance — but not having drawn for the two hundred and seventy pounds odd, or having ever overdrawn for a shilling in his life. Moreover, he is clearly of opinion that the banker has still in his hands more than a hundred and fifty pounds of his (Mr. Snook's) money. He can designate several gentlemen as being no creditors of his, although they were of the number of those from whom his purchases had been made for the "whacking" shipping order, and although their goods were found in the "Flitter." Ephraim is summoned, and testifies to all the particulars of his master's return, and the subsequent packing, cart-loading, and embarkation as already told — accounting for the extravagances of Mr. Snook as being "all along of *that* Miss Bodkin":—

"'Lor', master, hi 's glad to see you agin,' exclaimed Ephraim. 'Who 'd ha thought as 't would come to this?'

"'Come to what?' cried Peter. 'I 'll make 'em repent of it, every man Jack of em, before I 've done, if there 's law to be had for love or money!'

"'Ah, sir,' said Ephraim, 'we 'd better have stuck to the retail. I was afraid that shipping consarn would n't answer, and tell 'd you so, if you recollect, but you would n't hearken to me.'

"'What shipping concern?' inquired Peter, with a look of amazement.

"'La! master,' exclaimed Ephraim, 'it aint of any use to pretend to keep it a secret now, when everybody knows it. I did n't tell Mr. Pester, though, till the last, when all the goods was gone out of the shop, and the sheriff's officers had come to take possession of the house.'

"'Sheriff's officers in possession of my house!' roared Peter. 'All the goods gone out of the shop! What do you mean by that, you rascal? What have you been doing in my absence?' And he sprang forward furiously, and seized the trembling shopman by the collar with a degree of violence which rendered it difficult for the two officers in attendance to disengage him from his hold."

Hereupon, Mr. Snap, the attorney retained by the creditors, harangues the company at some length, and intimates that Mr. Snook is either mad or acting the madman for the purpose of evading punishment. A practitioner from Bedlam is sent for, and some artifices resorted to — but to no purpose. It is found impossible to decide upon the question of sanity. The medical gentleman, in his report to the creditors, confesses himself utterly perplexed, and, without giving a decision, details the particulars of a singular story told him by Mr. Snook himself, concerning the mode of his escape from drowning after he fell overboard from the "Rose in June." "It is a strange, unlikely tale, to be sure," says the physician, "and if his general conversation was of that wild, imagina-

tive, flighty kind which I have so often witnessed, I should say it was purely ideal; but he appears such a plain-spoken, simple sort of a person, that it is difficult to conceive how he could invent such a fiction." Mr. Snook's narration is then told, not in his very words, but in the author's own way, with all the particulars obtained from Peter's various recitations. We give it only in brief.

Upon tumbling overboard, Mr. Snook (at least according to his own story) swam courageously as long as he could. He was upon the point of sinking, however, when an oar was thrust under his arm, and he found himself lifted in a boat by a "dozen dark-looking men." He is taken on board a large ship, and the captain, who is a droll genius, and talks in rhyme somewhat after the fashion of the wondrous "Tale of Alroy," entertains him with great cordiality, dresses him in a suit of his own clothes, makes him drink in the first place a brimmer of "something hot," and afterwards plies him with wines and cordials of all kinds, at a supper of the most magnificent description. Warmed in body and mind by this excellent cheer, Peter reveals his inmost secrets to his host, and talks freely and minutely of a thousand things: of his man Ephraim and his oddities; of his bank account; of his great credit; of his adventures with Miss Bodkin; of his prospects in trade; and especially of the names, residences, etc., etc., of the wholesale houses with whom he is in the habit of dealing. Presently, being somewhat overcome with wine, he goes to bed at the suggestion of the captain, who promises to call him in season for a boat in the morning, which will convey him to Billingsgate in full time for Pester and Co.'s note. How long he slept is uncertain; but when he

awoke a great change was observable in the captain's manner, who was somewhat brusque, and handed him over the ship's side into the barge, where he was discovered by the creditors in pursuit, and which he was assured would convey him to Billingsgate.

This relation, thus succinctly given by us, implies little or nothing. The result, however, to which the reader is ingeniously led by the author, is, that the real Peter Snook has been duped, and that the Peter Snook who made the various purchases about town, and who appeared to Ephraim only during the morning and evening twilight of the eventful day, was in fact no other person than the captain of "the strange, black-sided ship." We are to believe that, taking advantage of Peter's communicativeness, and a certain degree of personal resemblance to himself, he assumed our hero's clothes while he slept, and made a bold and nearly successful attempt at wholesale peculation.

The incidents of this story are forcibly conceived, and even in the hands of an ordinary writer would scarcely fail of effect. But, in the present instance, so unusual a tact is developed in the narration that we are inclined to rank "Peter Snook" among the few tales which (each in its own way) are absolutely faultless. It is a Flemish home-piece of the highest order, its merits lying in its chiaroscuro — in that blending of light and shade and shadow, where nothing is too distinct, yet where the idea is fully conveyed — in the absence of all rigid outlines and all miniature painting — in the not undue warmth of the coloring — and in a well-subdued exaggeration at all points, an exaggeration never amounting to caricature.

WALSH'S "DIDACTICS"

HAVING read Mr. Walsh's "Didactics," with much attention and pleasure, I am prepared to admit that he is one of the finest writers, one of the most accomplished scholars, and, when not in too great a hurry, one of the most accurate thinkers in the country. Yet had I never seen this work I should never have entertained these opinions. Mr. Walsh has been peculiarly an anonymous writer, and has thus been instrumental in cheating himself of a great portion of that literary renown which is most unequivocally his due. I have been not unfrequently astonished in the perusal of this book at meeting with a variety of well known and highly esteemed acquaintances, for whose paternity I had been accustomed to give credit where I now find it should not have been given. Among these I may mention in especial the very excellent essay on the acting of Kean, entitled "Notices of Kean's principal performances during his first season in Philadelphia," to be found at page 146, volume i. I have often thought of the unknown author of this essay as of one to whom I might speak, if occasion should at any time be granted me, with a perfect certainty of being understood. I have looked to the article itself as to a fair oasis in the general blankness and futility of our customary theatrical notices. I read it with that thrill of pleasure with

which I always welcome my own long-cherished opinions, when I meet them unexpectedly in the language of another. How absolute is the necessity, now daily growing, of rescuing our stage criticism from the control of illiterate mountebanks, and placing it in the hands of gentlemen and scholars!

The paper on "Collegiate Education" is much more than a sufficient reply to that essay in the "Old Bachelor" of Mr. Wirt, in which the attempt is made to argue down colleges as seminaries for the young. Mr. Walsh's article does not uphold Mr. Barlow's plan of a National University — a plan which is assailed by the Attorney-General — but comments upon some errors in point of fact, and enters into a brief but comprehensive examination of the general subject. He maintains, with undeniable truth, that it is illogical to deduce arguments against universities which are to exist at the present day, from the inconveniences found to be connected with institutions formed in the dark ages — institutions similar to our own in but few respects, modelled upon the principles and prejudices of the times, organized with a view to particular ecclesiastical purposes, and confined in their operations by an infinity of Gothic and perplexing regulations. He thinks (and I believe he thinks with a great majority of our well-educated fellow-citizens) that in the case either of a great National Institute or of State Universities, nearly all the difficulties so much insisted upon will prove a series of mere chimeras — that the evils apprehended might be readily obviated, and the acknowledged benefits uninterruptedly secured. He denies, very justly, the assertion of the "Old Bachelor" — that, in the progress of society, funds for collegiate establishments will

no doubt be accumulated, independently of government, when their benefits are evident, and a necessity for them felt — and that the rich who have funds will, whenever strongly impressed with the necessity of so doing, provide, either by associations or otherwise, proper seminaries for the education of their children. He shows that these assertions are contradictory to experience, and more particularly to the experience of the State of Virginia, where, notwithstanding the extent of private opulence, and the disadvantages under which the community so long labored from a want of regular and systematic instruction, it was the government which was finally compelled, and not private societies which were induced, to provide establishments for effecting the great end. He says (and therein we must all fully agree with him) that Virginia may consider herself fortunate in following the example of all the enlightened nations of modern times rather than in hearkening to the counsels of the "Old Bachelor." He dissents (and who would not?) from the allegation that "the most eminent men in Europe, particularly in England, have received their education at neither public schools nor universities," and shows that the very reverse may be affirmed; that on the continent of Europe by far the greater number of its great names have been attached to the rolls of its universities, and that in England a vast majority of those minds which we have reverenced so long — the Bacons, the Newtons, the Barrows, the Clarkes, the Spensers, the Miltons, the Drydens, the Addisons, the Temples, the Hales, the Clarendons, the Mansfields, Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Wyndham, etc. — were educated among the venerable cloisters of Oxford or of Cambridge. He cites the "Oxford Prize

Essays," so well known even in America, as direct evidence of the energetic ardor in acquiring knowledge brought about through the means of British Universities, and maintains that "when attention is given to the subsequent public stations and labors of most of the writers of these 'Essays,' it will be found that they prove also the ultimate practical utility of the literary discipline of the colleges for the students and the nation." He argues, that were it even true that the greatest men have not been educated in public schools, the fact would have little to do with the question of their efficacy in the instruction of the mass of mankind. Great men cannot be *created* — and are usually independent of all particular schemes of education. Public seminaries are best adapted to the generality of cases. He concludes with observing that the course of study pursued at English universities is more liberal by far than we are willing to suppose it — that it is, demonstrably, the best, inasmuch as regards the preference given to classical and mathematical knowledge — and that upon the whole it would be an easy matter, in transferring to America the general principles of those institutions, to leave them their obvious errors, while we avail ourselves, as we best may, of their still more obvious virtues and advantages.

The only paper in the "Didactics," to which I have any decided objection, is a tolerably long article on the subject of phrenology, entitled "Memorial of the Phrenological Society of —— to the Honorable the Congress of —— sitting at ——." Considered as a specimen of mere burlesque, the "Memorial" is well enough — but I am sorry to see the energies of a scholar and an editor (who should be, if he be not,

a man of metaphysical science) so wickedly employed as in any attempt to throw ridicule upon a question (however much maligned, or however apparently ridiculous), whose merits he has never examined, and of whose very nature, history, and assumptions, he is most evidently ignorant. Mr. Walsh is either ashamed of this article now, or he will have plentiful reason to be ashamed of it hereafter.

MACAULAY'S "ESSAYS"

MACAULAY has obtained a reputation which, although deservedly great, is yet in a remarkable measure undeserved. The few who regard him merely as a terse, forcible, and logical writer, full of thought, and abounding in original views, often sagacious and never otherwise than admirably expressed, appear to us precisely in the right. The many who look upon him as not only all this, but as a comprehensive and profound thinker, little prone to error, err essentially themselves. The source of the general mistake lies in a very singular consideration, yet in one upon which we do not remember ever to have heard a word of comment. We allude to a tendency in the public mind towards logic for logic's sake, a liability to confound the vehicle with the conveyed, an aptitude to be so dazzled by the luminousness with which an idea is set forth as to mistake it for the luminousness of the idea itself. The error is one exactly analogous with that which leads the immature poet to think himself sublime wherever he is obscure, because obscurity is a source of the sublime — thus confounding obscurity of expression with the expression of obscurity. In the case of Macaulay — and we may say, *en passant*, of our own Channing — we assent to what he says too often because we so very clearly understand what it is that he intends to say. Comprehending vividly the

points and the sequence of his argument, we fancy that we are concurring in the argument itself. It is not every mind which is at once able to analyze the satisfaction it receives from such essays as we see here. If it were merely *beauty* of style for which they were distinguished, if they were remarkable only for rhetorical flourishes, we would not be apt to estimate these flourishes at more than their due value. We would not agree with the doctrines of the essayist on account of the elegance with which they were urged. On the contrary, we would be inclined to disbelief. But when all ornament save that of simplicity is disclaimed — when we are attacked by precision of language, by perfect accuracy of expression, by directness and singleness of thought, and above all by a logic the most rigorously close and consequential — it is hardly a matter for wonder that nine of us out of ten are content to rest in the gratification thus received as in the gratification of absolute truth.

Of the terseness and simple vigor of Macaulay's style it is unnecessary to point out instances. Every one will acknowledge his merits on this score. His exceeding *closeness* of logic, however, is more especially remarkable. With this he suffers nothing to interfere. Here, for example, is a sentence in which, to preserve entire the chain of his argument — *to leave no minute gap which the reader might have to fill up with thought* — he runs into most unusual tautology.

"The books and traditions of a sect may contain, mingled with propositions strictly theological, other propositions, purporting to rest on the same authority, which relate to physics. If new discoveries should throw discredit on the physical propositions, the theological propo-

sitions, unless they can be separated from the physical propositions, will share in their discredit."

These things are very well in their way; but it is indeed questionable whether they do not appertain rather to the trickery of thought's vehicle than to thought itself, rather to reason's shadow than to reason. Truth, for truth's sake, is seldom so enforced. It is scarcely too much to say that the style of the profound thinker is never closely logical. Here we might instance George Combe, than whom a more candid reasoner never, perhaps, wrote or spoke, than whom a more complete antipodes to Babington Macaulay there certainly never existed. The former *reasons* to discover the true. The latter *argues* to convince the world, and, in arguing, not unfrequently surprises himself into conviction. What Combe appears to Macaulay it would be a difficult thing to say. What Macaulay is thought of by Combe we can understand very well. The man who looks at an argument in its details alone, will not fail to be misled by the one; while he who keeps steadily in view the generality of a thesis will always at least approximate the truth under guidance of the other.

Macaulay's tendency — and the tendency of mere logic in general — to concentrate force upon minutiæ, at the expense of a subject as a whole, is well instanced in an article (in the volume now before us) on "Ranke's History of the Popes." This article is called a review — possibly because it is anything else — as *lucus* is *lucus a non lucendo.* In fact, it is nothing more than a beautifully written treatise on the main theme of Ranke himself; the whole matter of the treatise being deduced from the "History." In the

way of criticism there is nothing worth the name. The strength of the essayist is put forth to account for the progress of Romanism by maintaining that divinity is not a progressive science. The enigmas, says he in substance, which perplex the natural theologian are the same in all ages, while the Bible, where alone we are to seek revealed truth, has always been what it is.

The manner in which these two propositions are set forth, is a model for the logician and for the student of belles-lettres, yet the error into which the essayist has rushed headlong is egregious. He attempts to deceive his readers, or has deceived himself, by confounding the nature of that proof from which we reason of the concerns of earth, considered as man's habitation, and the nature of that evidence from which we reason of the same earth regarded as a unit of that vast whole, the universe. In the former case the data being palpable, the proof is direct: in the latter it is purely *analogical*. Were the indications we derive from science, of the nature and designs of Deity, and thence, by inference, of man's destiny — were these indications proof direct, no advance in science would strengthen them, for, as our author truly observes, "nothing could be added to the force of the argument which the mind finds in every beast, bird, or flower;" but as these indications are rigidly analogical, every step in human knowledge — every astronomical discovery, for instance — throws additional light upon the august subject, *by extending the range of analogy*. That we know no more to-day of the nature of Deity, of its purposes — and thus of man himself — than we did even a dozen years ago, is a proposition disgracefully absurd; and of this any astronomer

could assure Mr. Macaulay. Indeed, to our own mind, the *only* irrefutable argument in support of the soul's immortality — or, rather, the only conclusive proof of man's alternate dissolution and rejuvenescence *ad infinitum* — is to be found in analogies deduced from the modern established theory of the nebular cosmogony.[1] Mr. Macaulay, in short, has forgotten what he frequently forgets, or neglects, — the very gist of his subject. He has forgotten that analogical evidence cannot, at all times, be discoursed of as if identical with proof direct. Throughout the whole of his treatise he has made no distinction whatever.

[1] This cosmogony *demonstrates* that all existing bodies in the universe are formed of a nebular matter, a rare ethereal medium, pervading space — shows the mode and laws of formation — and *proves* that all things are in a perpetual state of progress — that nothing in nature is *perfected*.

EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE AND OTHER CRITICS

OUR most analytic, if not altogether our best critic (Mr. Whipple, perhaps, excepted) is Mr. William A. Jones, author of "The Analyst." How he would write elaborate criticisms I cannot say; but his summary judgments of authors are, in general, discriminative and profound. In fact, his papers on Emerson and on Macaulay, published in "Arcturus," are better than merely "profound," if we take the word in its now desecrated sense; for they are at once pointed, lucid, and just; as summaries, leaving nothing to be desired

Mr. Whipple has less analysis, and far less candor, as his depreciation of "Jane Eyre" will show; but he excels Mr. Jones in sensibility to beauty, and is thus the better critic of poetry. I have read nothing finer in its way than his eulogy on Tennyson. I say "eulogy" — for the essay in question is unhappily little more; and Mr. Whipple's paper on Miss Barrett was *nothing* more. He has less discrimination than Mr. Jones, and a more obtuse sense of the critical office. In fact, he has been infected with that unmeaning and transparent heresy — the cant of critical Boswellism, by dint of which we are to shut our eyes tightly to all authorial blemishes, and open them, like owls, to all authorial merits. Papers thus composed may be good in their way, just as an impertinent

cicerone is good in *his* way; and the way, in either case, may still be a small one.

Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo with a very caustic review of a very admirable poem. The god asked to be shown the beauties of the work; but the critic replied that he troubled himself only about the errors. Hereupon Apollo gave him a sack of unwinnowed wheat — bidding him pick out all the chaff for his pains.

Now this fable does very well as a hit at the critics; but I am by no means sure that the deity was in the right. The fact is, that the limits of the strict critical duty are grossly misapprehended. We may go so far as to say that, while the critic is permitted to play, at times, the part of the mere commentator — while he is allowed, by way of merely interesting his readers, to put in the fairest light the merits of his author — his legitimate task is still, in pointing out and analyzing defects and showing how the work might have been improved, to aid the general cause of Letters, without undue heed of the individual literary men. Beauty, to be brief, should be considered in the light of an axiom, which, to become at once evident, needs only to be distinctly put. It is not Beauty, if it require to be demonstrated as such: — and thus to point out too particularly the merits of a work, is to admit that they are not merits altogether.

When I say that both Mr. Jones and Mr. Whipple are, in some degree, imitators of Macaulay, I have no design that my words should be understood as disparagement. The style and general conduct of Macaulay's critical papers could scarcely be improved. To call his manner "conventional," is to do it gross

injustice. The manner of Carlyle is conventional — with himself. The style of Emerson is conventional — with himself and Carlyle. The style of Miss Fuller is conventional — with herself and Emerson and Carlyle, — that is to say, it is a triple-distilled conventionality; and by the word "conventionality," as here used, I mean very nearly what, as regards personal conduct, we style "affectation" — that is, an assumption of airs or *tricks* which have no basis in reason or common-sense. The quips, quirks, and curt oracularities of the Emersons, Alcotts, and Fullers, are simply Lyly's Euphuisms revived. Very different, indeed, are the *peculiarities* of Macaulay. He has his mannerisms; but we see that, by dint of them, he is enabled to accomplish the extremes of unquestionable excellences — the extreme of clearness, of vigor (dependent upon clearness), of grace, and very especially of thoroughness. For his short sentences, for his antitheses, for his modulations, for his climaxes — for everything that he does — a very slight analysis suffices to show a distinct reason. His manner, thus, is simply the perfection of that justifiable rhetoric which has its basis in common-sense; and to say that such rhetoric is never called in to the aid of *genius*, is simply to disparage genius, and by no means to discredit the rhetoric. It is nonsense to assert that the highest genius would not be benefited by attention to its modes of manifestation — by availing itself of that Natural Art which it too frequently despises. Is it not evident that the more intrinsically valuable the rough diamond, the more gain accrues to it from polish?

Now, since it would be nearly impossible to vary the rhetoric of Macaulay, in any material degree,

without deterioration in the *essential* particulars of clearness, vigor, etc., those who write *after* Macaulay have to choose between the two horns of a dilemma — they must be weak and original, or imitative and strong; and since imitation, in a case of this kind, is merely adherence to Truth and Reason as pointed out by one who feels their value, the author who should forego the advantages of the "imitation" for the mere sake of being erroneously original "*n'est pas si sage qu'il croit.*"

The true course to be pursued by our critics, justly sensible of Macaulay's excellences, is not, however, to be content with tamely following in his footsteps, but to outstrip him in his own path — a path not so much his as Nature's. We must not fall into the error of fancying that he is perfect, merely because he excels (in point of style) all his British cotemporaries. Some such idea as this seems to have taken possession of Mr. Jones, when he says: —

"Macaulay's style is admirable — full of color, perfectly clear, free from all obstructions, exactly English, and as pointedly antithetical as possible. We have marked two passages on Southey and Byron, so happy *as to defy improvement.* The one is a sharp epigrammatic paragraph on Southey's political bias: —

"'Government is to Mr. Southey one of the fine arts. He judges of a theory or a public measure, of a religion, a political party, a peace or a war, as men judge of a picture or a statue, by the effect produced on his imagination. A chain of associations is to him what a chain of reasoning is to other men; and what he calls his opinions are, in fact, merely his tastes.'

"The other, a balanced character of Lord Byron: —

"'In the rank of Lord Byron, in his understanding, in

his character, in his very person, there was a strange union of opposite extremes. He was born to all that men covet and admire. But in every one of those eminent advantages which he possessed over others, there was mingled something of misery and debasement. He was sprung from a house, ancient, indeed, and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of crimes and follies, which had attained a scandalous publicity. The kinsman whom he succeeded had died poor, and, but for merciful judges, would have died upon the gallows. The young peer had great intellectual powers; yet there was an unsound part in his mind. He had naturally a generous and feeling heart; but his temper was wayward and irritable. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot the deformity of which the beggars in the street mimicked.'"

Let us now look at the first of these paragraphs. The opening sentence is inaccurate at all points. The word "government" does not give the author's idea with sufficient definitiveness; for the term is *more* frequently applied to the *system* by which the affairs of a nation are regulated than to the act of regulating. "The government," we say, for example, "does so and so"—meaning those who govern. But Macaulay intends simply the act or acts called "governing," and this word should have been used, as a matter of course. The "Mr." prefixed to "Southey," is superfluous; for no sneer is designed; and, in *mistering* a well-known author, we hint that he is not entitled to that exemption which we accord to Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare. "*To* Mr. Southey" would have been right, had the succeeding words been "government *seems* one of the fine arts:"—but, as the sentence stands, "*With* Mr. Southey" is de-

manded. "Southey," too, being the principal subject of the paragraph, should precede "government," which is mentioned only in its relation to Southey. "One of the fine arts" is pleonastic, since the phrase conveys nothing more than "a fine art" would convey.

The second sentence is quite as faulty. Here Southey loses his precedence as the subject; and thus the "He" should follow "a theory," "a public measure," etc. By "religion" is meant a *creed:* — this latter word should therefore be used. The conclusion of the sentence is very awkward. Southey is said to judge of a peace or war, etc., "as men judge of a picture or a statue," and the words which succeed are intended to explain *how* men judge of a picture or a statue. These words should, therefore, run thus: "by the effect produced on *their* imaginations." "Produced," moreover, is neither so exact nor so "English" as "wrought." In saying that Southey judges of a political party, etc., "as *men* judge of a picture," etc., Southey is quite excluded from the category of "men." "*Other* men" was no doubt originally written, but "other" erased, on account of the "other men" occurring in the sentence below.

Coming to this last, we find that "a chain of associations" is not properly paralleled by "a chain of reason*ing*." We must say either "a chain of association" to meet the "reason*ing*," or "a chain of rea*sons*" to meet the "associations." The repetition of "what" is awkward and unpleasant. The entire paragraph should be thus remodelled: —

With Southey, governing is a fine art. Of a theory or a public measure — of a creed, a political party, a peace or a war — he judges by the imaginative effect; as only such things as pictures or statues are judged of by other men.

What to them a chain of reasoning is, to him is a chain of association; and, as to his opinions, they are nothing but his tastes.

The blemishes in the paragraph about Byron are more negative than those in the paragraph about Southey. The first sentence needs vivacity. The adjective "opposite" is superfluous: — so is the particle "there." The second and third sentences are, properly, one. "Some" would fully supply the place of "something of." The whole phrase "which he possessed over others," is supererogatory. "Was sprung," in place of "sprang," is altogether unjustifiable. The triple repetition of "and," in the fourth sentence, is awkward. "Notorious crimes and follies," would express all that is implied in "crimes and follies which had attained a scandalous publicity." The fifth sentence might be well curtailed; and as it stands, has an unintentional and unpleasant sneer. "Intellect" would do as well as "intellectual powers;" and this (the sixth) sentence might otherwise be shortened advantageously. The whole paragraph, in my opinion, would be better thus expressed:

In Lord Byron's rank, understanding, character — even in his person — we find a strange union of extremes. Whatever men covet and admire, became his by right of birth; yet debasement and misery were mingled with each of his eminent advantages. He sprang from a house, ancient it is true, and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of notorious crimes. But for merciful judges, the pauper kinsman whom he succeeded would have been hanged. The young peer had an intellect great, perhaps, yet partially unsound. His heart was generous, but his temper wayward; and while statuaries copied his head, beggars mimicked the deformity of his foot.

In these remarks, my object is not so much to point out inaccuracies in the most accurate stylist of his age, as to hint that our critics might surpass him on his own ground, and yet leave themselves something to learn in the moralities of manner.

HEADLEY'S "THE SACRED MOUNTAINS"

THE *Reverend* Mr. Headley (why *will* he not put his full title in his titlepages?) has in his "Sacred Mountains" been reversing the facts of the old fable about the mountains that brought forth the mouse — *parturiunt montes: nascitur ridiculus mus* — for in this instance it appears to be the mouse — the little *ridiculus mus* — that has been bringing forth the "Mountains," and a great litter of them, too. The epithet, "funny," however, is perhaps the only one which can be considered as thoroughly applicable to the book. We say that a book is a "funny" book, and nothing else, when it spreads over two hundred pages an amount of matter which could be conveniently presented in twenty of a magazine; that a book is a "funny" book — "only this and nothing more" — when it is written in that kind of phraseology, in which John Philpot Curran, when drunk, would have made a speech at a public dinner; and, moreover, we do say, emphatically, that a book is a "funny" book, and nothing but a "funny" book, whenever it happens to be penned by Mr. Headley.

We should like to give some account of "The Sacred Mountains," if the thing were only possible, but we cannot conceive that it is. Mr. Headley belongs to that numerous class of authors who must be

read to be understood, and who, for that reason, very seldom are as thoroughly comprehended as they should be. Let us endeavor, however, to give some general idea of the work. "The design," says the author, in his preface, "is to render more familiar and life-like some of the scenes of the Bible." Here, in the very first sentence of his preface, we suspect the Reverend Mr. Headley of fibbing: for his design, as it appears to ordinary apprehension, is merely that of making a little money by selling a little book.

The mountains described are Ararat, Moriah, Sinai, Hor, Pisgah, Horeb, Carmel, Lebanon, Zion, Tabor, Olivet, and Calvary. Taking up these, one by one, the author proceeds, in his own very peculiar way, to *elocutionize* about them: we really do not know how else to express what it is that Mr. Headley does with these eminences. Perhaps if we were to say that he stood up before the reader and "made a speech" about them, one after the other, we should come still nearer the truth. By way of carrying out his design, as announced in the preface — that of rendering "more familiar and life-like some of the scenes" and so forth — he tells not only how each mountain is, and was, but how it might have been and ought to be, in his own opinion. To hear him talk, anybody would suppose that he had been at the laying of the corner-stone of Solomon's Temple — to say nothing of being born and brought up in the ark with Noah, and hail-fellow-well-met with every one of the beasts that went into it. If any person really desires to know how and why it was that the deluge took place — but especially *how* — if any person wishes to get minute and accurate information on the topic, let him read "The Sacred Mountains," let him only listen to the Reverend Mr.

Headley. He explains to us precisely how it all took place — what Noah said, and thought, while the ark was building, and what the people, who saw him building the ark, said and thought about his undertaking such a work; and how the beasts, birds, and fishes looked, as they came in, arm in arm; and what the dove did, and what the raven did not — in short, all the rest of it: nothing could be more beautifully posted up. What *can* Mr. Headley mean, at page 17, by the remark that "there is no one who does not lament that there is not a fuller antediluvian history"? We are quite sure that nothing that ever happened before the flood has been omitted in the scrupulous researches of the author of "The Sacred Mountains."

He might, perhaps, wrap up the fruits of these researches in rather better English than that which he employs: —

"Yet *still* the water rose around them till all through the valleys nothing but little black islands of human beings *were* seen on the surface. . . . The more fixed the irrevocable decree, *the heavier* he leaned on the Omnipotent arm. . . . And lo! a solitary cloud comes drifting along the morning sky and *catches* against the top of the mountain. . . . At length emboldened by their own numbers they *assembled* tumultuously *together*. . . . Aaron never appears *so perfect* a character as Moses. . . . As he advanced from rock to rock the sobbing of the multitude that *followed after* tore his heart-strings. . . . Friends were *following after* whose sick Christ had healed. . . . The steady mountain threatened *to lift* from its base and be carried away. . . . Sometimes God's hatred of sin, sometimes His care for His children, sometimes the discipline of His church, *were* the motives. . . . Surely it was His mighty hand that *laid* on that trembling, tottering mountain."

These things are not exactly as we could wish them, perhaps; but that a gentleman should know so much about Noah's ark and know anything about anything else, is scarcely to be expected. We have no right to require English grammar and accurate information about Moses and Aaron at the hands of one and the same author. For our parts, now we come to think of it, if we only understood as much about Mount Sinai and other matters as Mr. Headley does, we should make a point of always writing bad English upon principle, whether we knew better or not.

It may well be made a question, moreover, how far a man of genius is justified in discussing topics so serious as those handled by Mr. Headley, in any ordinary kind of *style*. One should not talk about Scriptural subjects as one would talk about the rise and fall of stocks or the proceedings of Congress. Mr. Headley has seemed to feel this and has therefore elevated his manner — a little. For example: —

"The fields were smiling in verdure before his eyes; the perfumed breezes *floated by*. . . . The sun is *sailing* over the encampment. . . . That cloud was God's pavilion; the thunder was its sentinels; and the lightning the lances' points as they moved round the sacred trust. . . . And how could he part with his children whom he had *borne on his brave heart* for more than forty years? . . . Thus everything conspired to render Zion the spell-word of the nation and on its summit the *heart of Israel seemed to lie and throb*. . . . The sun died in the heavens; *an earthquake thundered* on to complete the dismay," etc., etc.

Here no one can fail to perceive the beauty (in an antediluvian, or at least in a Pickwickian, sense) of these expressions in general, about the floating of the breeze, the sailing of the sun, the thundering of the

earthquake, and the throbbing of the heart as it lay on the top of the mountain.

The true artist, however, always rises as he proceeds, and in his last page or so brings all his elocution to a climax. Only hear Mr. Headley's *finale*. He has been describing the crucifixion, and now soars into the sublime: —

"How Heaven regarded this disaster, and the Universe felt at the sight, I cannot tell. I know not but tears fell like rain-drops from angelic eyes when they saw Christ spit upon and struck. I know not but there was silence on high for *more* than 'half an hour' when the scene of the crucifixion was transpiring [a scene, as well as an event, always "transpires" with Mr. Headley], a silence unbroken save by the solitary sound of some harp-string on which unconsciously fell the agitated, trembling fingers of a seraph. I know not but all the radiant ranks on high, and even Gabriel himself, turned with the deepest solicitude to the Father's face, to see if He was calm and untroubled amid it all. I know not but His composed brow and serene majesty were all that restrained Heaven from one universal shriek of horror when they heard groans on Calvary — *dying* groans. I know not but they thought God had given His glory to another, but one thing I *do* know [Ah, there *is* really one thing Mr. Headley knows!] — that when they saw through the vast design, comprehended the stupendous scene, the hills of God shook to a shout that never before rung over their bright tops, and the crystal sea trembled to a song that had never before stirred its bright depths, and the 'Glory to God in the Highest' was a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."

Here we have direct evidence of Mr. Headley's accuracy not less than of his eloquence. "I know not but that" one is as vast as the other. The one thing

that he does know he knows to perfection: — he knows not only what the chorus was (it was one of "hallelujahs and harping symphonies") but also how much of it there was — it was a "sevenfold chorus." Mr. Headley is a mathematical man. Moreover, he is a modest man; for he confesses (no doubt with tears in his eyes) that really there is one thing that he does not know. "How Heaven regarded this disaster, and the Universe felt at the sight, I cannot tell." Only think of that! *I* cannot! — *I*, Headley, really cannot tell how the Universe "felt" once upon a time! This is downright bashfulness on the part of Mr. Headley. He *could* tell if he would only try. Why did he not inquire? Had he demanded of the Universe how it felt, can any one doubt that the answer would have been — "Pretty well, I thank you, my dear Headley; how do you feel yourself?"

"Quack" is a word that sounds well only in the mouth of a duck; and upon our honor we feel a scruple in using it: — nevertheless the truth should be told; and the simple fact is, that the author of "The Sacred Mountains" is the Autocrat of all the Quacks. In saying this, we beg not to be misunderstood. We mean no disparagement to Mr. Headley. We admire that gentleman as much as any individual ever did except that gentleman himself. He looks remarkably well at all points — although perhaps best, ἑκάς — at a distance — as the lying Pindar says he saw Archilochus, who died ages before the vagabond was born: — the reader will excuse the digression; but talking of one great man is very apt to put us in mind of another. We were saying — were we not? — that Mr. Headley is by no means to be sneered at as a quack. This might be justifiable, indeed, were he only a

quack in a small way — a quack doing business by retail. But the wholesale dealer is entitled to respect. Besides, the Reverend author of "Napoleon and his Marshals" was a quack to some purpose. He knows what he is about. We like perfection wherever we see it. We readily forgive a man for being a fool if he only be a *perfect* fool — and this is a particular in which we cannot put our hands upon our hearts and say that Mr. Headley is deficient. He acts upon the principle that if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well: — and the thing that he "does" especially well is the public.

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STEPHENS'S "ARABIA PETRÆA"

MR. STEPHENS has here given us two volumes of more than ordinary interest — written with a freshness of manner, and evincing a manliness of feeling, both worthy of high consideration. Although in some respects deficient, the work, too, presents some points of moment to the geographer, to the antiquarian, and more especially to the theologian. Viewed only as one of a class of writings whose direct tendency is to throw light upon the Book of Books, it has strong claims upon the attention of all who read. While the vast importance of critical and philological research, in dissipating the obscurities and determining the exact sense of the Scriptures, cannot be too readily conceded, it may be doubted whether the collateral illustration derivable from records of travel be not deserving at least equal consideration. Certainly the evidence thus afforded, exerting an enkindling influence upon the popular imagination, and so taking palpable hold upon the popular understanding, will not fail to become in time a most powerful because easily available instrument in the downfall of unbelief. Infidelity itself has often afforded unwilling and unwitting testimony to the truth. It is surprising to find with what unintentional precision both Gibbon and Volney (among others) have used, for the purpose of *description*, in their accounts of nations and countries,

the identical phraseology employed by the inspired writers when foretelling the most improbable events. In this manner scepticism has been made the root of belief, and the providence of the Deity has been no less remarkable, in the extent and nature of the means for bringing to light the evidence of his accomplished word, than in working the accomplishment itself.

Of late days, the immense stores of biblical elucidation derivable from the East have been rapidly accumulating in the hands of the student. When the "Observations" of Harmer were given to the public, he had access to few other works than the travels of Chardin, Pococke, Shaw, Maundrell, Pitts, and D'Arvieux, with perhaps those of Nau and Troilo, and Russell's "Natural History of Aleppo." We have now a vast accession to our knowledge of Oriental regions. Intelligent and observing men, impelled by the various motives of Christian zeal, military adventure, the love of gain, and the love of science, have made their way, often at imminent risk, into every land rendered holy by the words of revelation. Through the medium of the pencil, as well as of the pen, we are even familiarly acquainted with the territories of the Bible. Valuable books of eastern travel are abundant — of which the labors of Niebuhr, Mariti, Volney, Porter, Clarke, Chateaubriand, Burckhardt, Buckingham, Morier, Seetzen, De Lamartine, Laborde, Tournefort, Madden, Maddox, Wilkinson, Arundell, Mangles, Leigh, and Hogg, besides those already mentioned, are merely the principal, or the most extensively known. As we have said, however, the work before us is not to be lightly regarded: highly agreeable, interesting, and instructive, in a general

view, it also has, in the connection now adverted to, claims to public attention possessed by no other book of its kind.

In an article prepared for this journal some months ago, we had traced the route of Mr. Stephens with a degree of minuteness not desirable now, when the work has been so long in the hands of the public. At this late day we must be content with saying, briefly, in regard to the earlier portion of the narrative, that, arriving at Alexandria in December, 1835, he thence passed up the Nile as far as the Lower Cataracts. One or two passages from this part of the tour may still be noted for observation. The annexed speculations, in regard to the present city of Alexandria, are well worth attention.

"The present city of Alexandria, even after the dreadful ravages made by the plague last year, is still supposed to contain more than 50,000 inhabitants, and is decidedly growing. It stands outside the Delta in the Libyan Desert, and as Volney remarks, 'It is only by the canal which conducts the waters of the Nile into the reservoirs in the time of inundation, that Alexandria can be considered as connected with Egypt.' Founded by the great Alexander, to secure his conquests ir the East, being the only safe harbor along the coast of Syria or Africa, and possessing peculiar commercial advantages, it soon grew into a giant city. Fifteen miles in circumference, containing a population of 300,000 citizens and as many slaves, one magnificent street, 2,000 feet broad, ran the whole length of the city, from the Gate of the Sea to the Canobic Gate, commanding a view, at each end, of the shipping either in the Mediterranean or in the Mareotic Lake, and another of equal length intersected it at right angles; a spacious circus without the Canobic Gate, for chariot-races, and on the east a splendid gymnasium more than

six hundred feet in length, with theatres, baths, and all that could make it a desirable residence for a luxurious people. When it fell into the hands of the Saracens, according to the report of the Saracen general to the Calif Omar, 'it was impossible to enumerate the variety of its riches and beauty;' and it is said to 'have contained four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four hundred theatres or public edifices, twelve thousand shops, and forty thousand tributary Jews.' From that time, like everything else which falls into the hands of the Mussulman, it has been going to ruin, and the discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope gave the death-blow to its commercial greatness. At present it stands a phenomenon in the history of a Turkish do minion. It appears once more to be raising its head from the dust. It remains to be seen whether this rise is the legitimate and permanent effect of a wise and politic government, combined with natural advantages, or whether the pacha is not forcing it to an unnatural elevation, at the expense, if not upon the ruins, of the rest of Egypt. It is almost presumptuous, on the threshold of my entrance into Egypt, to speculate upon the future condition of this interesting country; but it is clear that the pacha is determined to build up the city of Alexandria, if he can: his fleet is here, his army, his arsenal, and his forts are here, and he has forced and centred here a commerce that was before divided between several places. Rosetta has lost more than two thirds of its population. Damietta has become a mere nothing, and even Cairo the Grand has become tributary to what is called the regenerated city." i. 21, 22.

We see no presumption in this attempt to speculate upon the future condition of Egypt. Its destinies are matter for the attentive consideration of every reader of the Bible. No words can be more definitive, more utterly free from ambiguity, than the prophecies con-

cerning this region. No events could be more wonderful in their nature, nor more impossible to have been foreseen by the eye of man, than the events foretold concerning it. With the earliest ages of the world its line of monarchs began, and the annihilation of the entire dynasty was predicted during the zenith of that dynasty's power. One of the most lucid of the biblical commentators has justly observed that the very attempt once made by infidels to show, from the recorded number of its monarchs and the duration of their reigns, that Egypt was a kingdom previous to the Mosaic era of the deluge, places in the most striking view the extraordinary character of the prophecies regarding it. During two thousand years prior to these predictions Egypt had never been without a prince of its own; and how oppressive was its tyranny over Judæa and the neighboring nations! It, however, was distinctly foretold that this country of kings should no longer have one of its own — that it should be laid waste by the hand of strangers — that it should be a base kingdom, the basest of the base — that it should *never* again exalt itself among the nations — that it should be a desolation surrounded by desolation. Two thousand years have now afforded their testimony to the infallibility of the Divine word, and the evidence is still accumulative. "Its past and present degeneracy bears not a more remote resemblance to the former greatness and pride of its power than the frailty of its mud-walled fabric now bears to the stability of its imperishable pyramids." But it should be remembered that there are other prophecies concerning it which still await their fulfilment. The whole earth shall rejoice, and Egypt *shall not be forever base:* —

"The Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it; and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

"In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land." Isa. xix. 22, 24.

In regard to the present degree of political power and importance to which the country has certainly arisen under Mohammed Aly (an importance unknown for many centuries), the fact, as Mr. Keith observes in his valuable "Evidence of Prophecy," may possibly serve, at no distant period, to illustrate the prediction which implies, that, however base and degraded it might be throughout many generations, it would, notwithstanding, have strength sufficient to be looked to for aid or protection, even at the time of the restoration of the Jews to Judæa, who will seek "to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and trust in *the shadow of Egypt*." How emphatically her present feeble prosperity is, after all, but the *shadow* of the Egypt of the Pharaohs, we leave to the explorer of her pyramids, the wanderer among the tombs of her kings or the fragments of her Luxor and her Carnac.

At Djiddeh, formerly the capital of Upper Egypt and the largest town on the Nile, Mr. Stephens encountered two large boat-loads of slaves — probably five or six hundred — collected at Dongola and Sennaar.

"In the East," he writes, "slavery exists now precisely as it did in the days of the patriarchs. The slave is received into the family of a Turk, in a relation more confidential and respectable than that of an ordinary domestic; and when liberated, which very often happens, stands upon the same footing with a free man. The curse does not rest

upon him forever; he may sit at the same board, dip his hand in the same dish, and, if there are no other impediments, may marry his master's daughter."

Morier says, in his "Journey through Persia"—

"The manners of the East, amidst all the changes of government and of religion, are still the same; they are living impressions from an original mould; and, at every step, some object, some idiom, some dress, or some custom of common life, reminds the traveller of ancient times, and confirms, above all, the beauty, the accuracy, and the propriety of the language and the history of the Bible."

Sir John Chardin, also, in the preface to his "Travels in Persia" employs similar language:—

"And the learned, to whom I communicated my design, encouraged me very much by their commendations to proceed in it; and more especially when I informed them that it is not in Asia, as in our Europe, where there are frequent changes, more or less, in the form of things, as the habits, buildings, gardens, and the like. In the East they are constant in all things. The habits are at this day in the same manner as in the precedent ages; so that one may reasonably believe that, in that part of the world, the exterior forms of things (as their manners and customs) are the same now as they were two thousand years since, except in such changes as have been introduced by religion, which are, nevertheless, very inconsiderable."

Nor is such striking testimony unsupported. From all sources we derive evidence of the conformity, almost of the identity, of the modern with the ancient usages of the East. This steadfast resistance to innovation is a trait remarkably confined to the regions of biblical history, and (it should not be doubted) will remain in force until it shall have fulfilled all the

important purposes of biblical elucidation. Hereafter, when the ends of Providence shall be thoroughly answered, it will not fail to give way before the influence of that very Word it has been instrumental in establishing; and the tide of civilization, which has hitherto flowed continuously from the rising to the setting sun, will be driven back, with a partial ebb, into its original channels.

Returning from the cataracts, Mr. Stephens found himself safely at Cairo, where terminated his journeyings upon the Nile. He had passed "from Migdol to Syene, even unto the borders of Ethiopia." In regard to the facilities, comforts, and minor enjoyments of the voyage, he speaks of them in a manner so favorable, that many of our young countrymen will be induced to follow his example. It is an amusement, he says, even ridiculously cheap, and attended with no degree of danger. A boat with ten men is procured for thirty or forty dollars a month, fowls for three piastres a pair, a sheep for a half or three quarters of a dollar, and eggs for the asking. "You sail under your own country's banner; and when you walk along the river, if the Arabs look particularly black and truculent, you proudly feel that there is safety in its folds."

We now approach what is by far the most interesting and the most important portion of his tour. Mr. Stephens had resolved to visit Mount Sinai, proceeding thence to the Holy Land. If he should return to Suez, and thus across the desert to El Arich and Gaza, he would be subjected to a quarantine of fourteen days on account of the plague in Egypt; and this difficulty might be avoided by striking through the heart of the desert lying between Mount Sinai

and the frontier of Palestine. This route was beset with danger; but, apart from the matter of avoiding quarantine, it had other strong temptations for the enterprise and enthusiasm of the traveller — temptations not to be resisted. "The route," says Mr. Stephens, "was hitherto untravelled," and moreover, it lay through a region upon which has long rested, and still rests, a remarkable curse of the Divinity, issued through the voices of His prophets. We allude to the land of Idumea — the Edom of the Scriptures. Some English friends, who first suggested this route to Mr. Stephens, referred him, for information concerning it, to Keith on the Prophecies. Mr. Keith, as our readers are aware, contends for the *literal* fulfilment of prophecy, and in the treatise in question brings forward a mass of evidence and a world of argument, which we, at least, are constrained to consider, as a whole, irrefutable. We look upon the *literalness* of the understanding of the Bible predictions as an *essential* feature in prophecy — conceiving minuteness of detail to have been but a portion of the providential plan of the Deity for bringing more visibly to light, in after-ages, the *evidence* of the fulfilment of His word. No general meaning attached to a prediction, no general fulfilment of such prediction, could carry, to the reason of mankind, inferences so unquestionable as its particular and minutely incidental accomplishment. General statements, except in rare instances, are susceptible of misinterpretation or misapplication: details admit no shadow of ambiguity. That, in many striking cases, the words of the prophets have been brought to pass in every particular of a series of minutiæ, whose very meaning was unintelligible before the period of fulfilment, is

a truth that few are so utterly stubborn as to deny. We mean to say that, in *all* instances, the most strictly literal interpretation will apply. There is, no doubt, much unbelief founded upon the *obscurity* of the prophetic expression; and the question is frequently demanded — "wherein lies the use of this obscurity? — why are not the prophecies distinct?" —These words, it is said, are incoherent, unintelligible, and should be therefore regarded as untrue. That many prophecies are absolutely unintelligible should not be denied — it is a part of their essence that they should be. The obscurity, like the apparently irrelevant detail, has its object in the providence of God. Were the words of inspiration, affording insight into the events of futurity, *at all times* so pointedly clear that he who runs might read, they would in many cases, even when fulfilled, afford a rational ground for unbelief in the inspiration of their authors, and consequently in the whole truth of revelation; for it would be supposed that these distinct words, exciting union and emulation among Christians, had thus been merely the means of working out their own accomplishment. It is for this reason that the most of the predictions become intelligible only when viewed from the proper point of observation — the period of fulfilment. Perceiving this, the philosophical thinker, and the Christian, will draw no argument from the obscurity, against the verity, of prophecy. Having seen palpably, incontrovertibly fulfilled, even one of these many wonderful predictions, of whose meaning, until the day of accomplishment, he could form no conception; and having thoroughly satisfied himself that no human foresight could have been equal to such amount of foreknowl-

edge, he will await, in confident expectation, that moment certainly to come when the darkness of the veil shall be uplifted from the others. [1]

[1] We cannot do better than quote here the words of a writer in the "London Quarterly Review." "Twenty years ago we read certain portions of the prophetic Scriptures with a belief that they were true, because other similar passages had in the course of ages been proved to be so; and we had an indistinct notion that all these, to us obscure and indefinite denunciations, had been — we knew not very well when or how — accomplished; but to have graphic descriptions, ground plans, and elevations showing the actual existence of all the heretofore vague and shadowy denunciations of God against Edom, does, we confess, excite our feelings, and exalt our confidence in prophecy to a height that no external evidence has hitherto done."

Many prophecies, it should be remembered are in a state of gradual fulfilment — a chain of evidence being thus made to extend throughout a long series of ages, for the benefit of man at large, without being confined to one epoch or generation, which would be the case in a fulfilment suddenly coming to pass. Thus, some portion of the prophecies concerning Edom has reference to the year of recompense for the controversy of Sion.

One word in regard to the work of Keith. Since penning this article we have been grieved to see, in a New York daily paper, some strictures on this well-known treatise, which we think unnecessary, if not positively unjust; and which, indeed, are little more than a revival of the old story trumped up for purposes of its own, and in the most bitter spirit of unfairness, by the "London Quarterly Review." We allude especially to the charge of plagiarism from the work of Bishop Newton. It would be quite as reasonable to accuse Dr. Webster of having stolen his Dictionary from Dr. Johnson, or any other compiler of having plundered any other. But the work of Keith, as we learn from himself, was written hastily, for the immediate service, and at the urgent solicitation, of a friend, whose faith wavered in regard to the Evidences of Prophecy, and who applied to the author to aid his unbelief with a condensed view of these Evidences. In the preface of the book thus composed, with no view to any merits of authorship, and, indeed, with none except that of immediate utility, there is

Having expressed our belief in the literal fulfilment of prophecy in *all* cases,[1] and having suggested, as one reason for the non-prevalence of this belief, the improper point of view from which we are accustomed to regard it, it remains to be seen what were the principal predictions in respect to Idumea.

"From generation to generation it shall lie waste; *none shall pass through it* for ever and ever.

"But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

"They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

"And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation for dragons and a court for owls.

"The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

"There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and

found the fullest disclaimer of all pretension to originality — surely motives and circumstances such as these should have sufficed to secure Dr. Keith from the unmeaning charges of plagiarism, which have been so pertinaciously adduced! We do not mean to deny that, in the blindness of his zeal, and in the firm conviction entertained by him of the general truth of his assumptions, he frequently adopted surmises as facts, and did essential injury to his cause by carrying out his positions to an unwarrantable length. With all its inaccuracies, however, his work must still be regarded as one of the most important triumphs of faith, and, beyond doubt, as a most lucid and conclusive train of argument.

[1] Of course it will be understood that a proper allowance must be made for the usual hyperbolical tendency of the language of the East.

hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

"Seek thee out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

"And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line; they shall possess it forever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein." Isaiah xxxiv. 10–17.

"Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate, and *cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.*" Ezekiel xxxv. 7.

In regard to such of the passages here quoted as are not printed in Italics, we must be content with referring to the treatise of Keith already mentioned, wherein the evidences of the fulfilment of the predictions in their most minute particulars are gathered into one view. We may as well, however, present here the substance of his observations respecting the words — "none shall pass through it forever and ever," and "thus will I make Mount Seir desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth."

He says that Volney, Burckhardt, Joliffe, Henniker, and Captains Irby and Mangles, adduce a variety of circumstances, all conspiring to prove that Idumea, which was long resorted to from every quarter, is so beset on every side with dangers to the traveller, that literally *none pass through it;* that even the Arabs of the neighboring regions, whose home is the desert, and whose occupation is wandering, are afraid to enter it, or to conduct any within its borders. He says, too, that amid all this manifold testimony to its truth, there is not, in any single instance, the most

distant allusion to the prediction — that the evidence is unsuspicious and undesigned.

A Roman road passed directly through Idumea from Jerusalem to Akaba, and another from Akaba to Moab; and when these roads were made, at a time long posterior to the date of the predictions, the conception could not have been formed, or held credible by man, that the period would ever arrive when none should pass through it. Indeed, seven hundred years after the date of the prophecy, we are informed by Strabo that the roads were actually in use. The prediction is yet more surprising, he says, when viewed in conjunction with that which implies that travellers should *pass by* Idumea — "every one that goeth by shall be astonished." The routes of the pilgrims from Damascus, and from Cairo to Mecca, the one on the east and the other towards the south of Edom, along the whole of its extent, go by it, or touch partially on its borders, *without going through it.*

Not even, he says, the cases of Seetzen and Burckhardt can be urged against the literal fulfilment, although Seetzen actually *did* pass through Idumea, and Burckhardt traversed a considerable portion of it. The former died not long after the completion of his journey; and the latter never recovered from the effects of the hardships endured on the route — dying at Cairo. "Neither of them," we have given the precise words of Mr. Keith, "lived to return to Europe. *I will cut off from Mount Seir him that passeth out and him that returneth.* Strabo mentions that there was a direct road from Petra to Jericho, of three or four days' journey. Captains Irby and Mangles were eighteen days in reaching it from Jerusalem. They did not *pass through* Idumea, and they did return.

Seetzen and Burckhardt did pass through it, and they did *not* return."

"The words of the prediction," he elsewhere observes, "might well be understood as merely implying that Idumea would cease to be a thoroughfare for the commerce of the nations which adjoined it, and that its highly-frequented marts would be forsaken as centres of intercourse and traffic; and easy would have been the task of demonstrating its truth in this limited sense which scepticism itself ought not to be unwilling to authorize."

Here is, no doubt, much inaccuracy and misunderstanding; and the exact boundaries of ancient Edom are, apparently, not borne in mind by the commentator. Idumea proper was, strictly speaking, only the mountainous tract of country east of the valley of El-Ghor. The Idumeans, if we rightly apprehend, did not get possession of any portion of the south of Judæa till after the exile, and consequently until after the prophecies in question. They then advanced as far as Hebron, where they were arrested by the Maccabees. That "Seetzen actually did pass through Idumea," cannot therefore be asserted; and thus much is in favor of the whole argument of Dr. Keith, while in contradiction to a branch of that argument. The traveller in question (see his own "Narrative"), pursuing his route on the east of the Dead Sea, proceeded no farther in this direction then to Kerek, when he retraced his way — afterwards going from Hebron to Mount Sinai, over the desert eastward of Edom. Neither is it strictly correct that he "died not long after the completion of his journey." Several years afterwards he was actively employed in Egypt; and finally died, not from constitutional injury sus-

tained from any former adventure, but, if we remember, from the effects of poison administered by his guide in a journey from Mocha into the heart of Arabia. We see no ground either for the statement that Burckhardt owed his death to hardships endured in Idumea. Having visited Petra, and crossed the western desert of Egypt in the year 1812, we find him, four years afterwards, sufficiently well, at Mount Sinai. He did not die until the close of 1817, and then of a diarrhœa brought about by the imprudent use of cold water.

But let us dismiss these and some other instances of misstatement. It should not be a matter of surprise that, perceiving, as he no doubt did, the *object* of the circumstantiality of prophecy, clearly seeing in how many wonderful cases its minutiæ had been fulfilled, and withal being thoroughly imbued with a love of truth, and with that zeal which is becoming in a Christian, Dr. Keith should have plunged somewhat hastily or blindly into these inquiries, and pushed to an improper extent the principle for which he contended. It should be observed that the passage cited just above in regard to Seetzen and Burckhardt, is given in a foot-note, and has the appearance of an after-thought, about whose propriety its author did not feel perfectly content. It is certainly very difficult to reconcile the literal fulfilment of the prophecy with an acknowledgment militating so violently against it as we find in his own words — "Seetzen actually *did pass through* Idumea, and Burckhardt *travelled through* a considerable portion of it." And what we are told subsequently in respect to Irby and Mangles, and Seetzen and Burckhardt — that these *did not* pass through Idumea and *did* return, while those *did* pass

through and *did not* return — where a passage from Ezekiel is brought to sustain collaterally a passage from Isaiah — is certainly not in the spirit of literal investigation; partaking, indeed, somewhat of *équivoque*.

But in regard to the possibility of the actual passage through Edom, we might now consider all ambiguity at an end, could we suffer ourselves to adopt the opinion of Mr. Stephens, that he himself had at length traversed the disputed region. What we have said already, however, respecting the proper boundaries of that Idumea to which the prophecies have allusion, will assure the reader that we cannot entertain this idea. It will be clearly seen that he did not *pass through* the Edom of Ezekiel. That he might have done so, however, is sufficiently evident. The indomitable perseverance which bore him up amid the hardships and dangers of the route actually traversed, would, beyond doubt, have sufficed to insure him a successful passage even through Idumea the proper. And this we say, maintaining still an unhesitating belief in the literal understanding of the prophecies. It is essential, however, that these prophecies be literally rendered; and it is a matter for regret as well as surprise, that Dr. Keith should have failed to determine so important a point as the exactness or falsity of the version of his text. This we will now briefly examine.

Isaiah xxxiv. 10.

לָנֶצַח — "For an eternity,"
נְצָחִים — "of eternities,"
אֵין — "not,"
עֹבֵר — "moving about,"
: בָּהּ — "in it."

"For an eternity of eternities (there shall) not (be any one) moving about in it." The literal meaning of "בָּהּ" is "*in it*," not "through it." The participle "עֹבֵר" refers to one moving to and fro or up and down, and is the same term which is rendered "*current*," as an epithet of money, in Genesis xxiii. 16. The prophet means that there shall be no marks of life in the land, no living being there, no one moving up and down in it: and are, of course, to be taken with the usual allowance for that hyperbole which is a main feature, and indeed the genius of the language.

Ezekiel xxxv. 7.

וְנָתַתִּי — "and I will give,"
אֶת־הַר — "the mountain,"
שֵׂעִיר — "Seir,"
לְשַׁמָּה — "for a desolation,"
וּשְׁמָמָה — "and a desolation,"
וְהִכְרַתִּי — "and I will cut off,"
מִמֶּנּוּ — "from it,"
עֹבֵר — "him that goeth,"
וָשָׁב — "and him that returneth."

"And I will give mount Seir for an utter desolation, and will cut off from it him *that passeth and repasseth therein*." The reference here is the same as in the previous passage, and the inhabitants of the land are alluded to as moving about therein, and actively employed in the business of life. The meaning of "passing and repassing" is sanctioned by Gesenius, s. v. vol. 2, p. 570, Leo's translation. Compare Zechariah vii. 14, and ix. 8. There is something analogous in the

Hebrew-Greek phrase occurring in Acts ix. 28. Καὶ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ. "And he was with them in Jerusalem coming in and going out." The Latin "versatus est" conveys the meaning precisely; which is, that Saul, the new convert, was on intimate terms with the true believers in Jerusalem, moving about among them to and fro, or in and out. It is plain, therefore, that the words of the prophets, in both cases, and when literally construed, intend only to predict the general desolation and abandonment of the land. Indeed, it should have been taken into consideration, that a strict prohibition on the part of the Deity, of an entrance into, or passage through, Idumea, would have effectually cut off from mankind all evidence of this prior sentence of desolation and abandonment; the prediction itself being thus rendered a dead letter, when viewed in regard to its ulterior and most important purpose — the dissemination of the faith.

Mr. Stephens was strongly dissuaded from his design. Almost the only person who encouraged him was Mr. Gliddon, our consul; and but for him the idea would have been abandoned. The dangers indeed were many, and the difficulties more. By good fortune, however, the Sheik of Akaba was then at Cairo. The great yearly caravan of pilgrims for Mecca was assembling beneath the walls, and he had been summoned by the pacha to escort and protect them through the desert as far as Akaba. He was the chief of a powerful tribe of Bedouins, maintaining, in all its vigor, the independence of their race, and bidding defiance to the pacha, while they yielded him such obedience as comported with their own immediate interests.

With this potentate our traveller entered into negotiation. The precise service required of him was to conduct Mr. Stephens from Akaba to Hebron, through the land of Edom, diverging to visit the excavated city of Petra,—a journey of about ten days. A very indefinite arrangement was at length made. Mr. Stephens, after visiting Mount Sinai, was to repair to Akaba, where he would meet the escort of the Bedouin. With a view to protection on his way from Cairo to the Holy Mountain, the latter gave him his signet, which he told him would be respected by all Arabs on the route.

The arrangements for the journey as far as Mount Sinai had been made for our traveller by Mr. Gliddon. A Bedouin was procured as guide who had been with M. Laborde to Petra, and whose faith, as well as capacity, could be depended upon. The caravan consisted of eight camels and dromedaries, with three young Arabs as drivers. The tent was the common tent of the Egyptian soldiers, bought at the government factory, being very light, easily carried and pitched. The bedding was a mattress and coverlet: provision, bread, biscuit, rice, macaroni, tea, coffee, dried apricots, oranges, a roasted leg of mutton, and two large skins containing the filtered water of the Nile. Thus equipped, the party struck immediately into the desert lying between Cairo and Suez, reaching the latter place, with but little incident, after a journey of four days. At Suez, our traveller, wearied with his experiment of the dromedary, made an attempt to hire a boat, with a view of proceeding down the Red Sea to Tor, supposed to be the Elino, or place of palm-trees mentioned in the Exodus of the Israelites, and only two days' journey from Mount

Sinai. The boats, however, were all taken by pilgrims, and none could be procured — at least for so long a voyage. He accordingly sent off his camels round the head of the gulf, and, crossing himself by water, met them on the Petræan side of the sea.

"I am aware," says Mr. Stephens, "that there is some dispute as to the precise spot where Moses crossed; but having no time for scepticism on such matters, I began by making up my mind that this was the place, and then looked around to see whether, according to the account given in the Bible, the face of the country and the natural landmarks did not sustain my opinion. I remember I looked up to the head of the gulf, where Suez or Kolsum now stands, and saw that almost to the very head of the gulf there was a high range of mountains which it would be necessary to cross, an undertaking which it would have been physically impossible for 600,000 people, men, women, and children, to accomplish, with a hostile army pursuing them. At Suez, Moses could not have been hemmed in as he was; he could go off into the Syrian desert, or, unless the sea has greatly changed since that time, round the head of the gulf. But here, directly opposite where I sat, was an opening in the mountains, making a clear passage from the desert to the shore of the sea. It is admitted that from the earliest history of the country, there was a caravan route from the Rameseh of the Pharaohs to this spot, and it was perfectly clear to my mind that, if the account be true at all, Moses had taken that route; that it was directly opposite me, between the two mountains, where he had come down with his multitude to the shore, and that it was there he had found himself hemmed in, in the manner described in the Bible, with the sea before him, and the army of Pharaoh in his rear; it was there he stretched out his hand and divided the waters; and probably on the very spot where I sat the children of Israel had kneeled upon the sands to offer thanks to God

for his miraculous interposition. The distance, too, was in confirmation of this opinion. It was about twenty miles across; the distance which that immense multitude, with their necessary baggage, could have passed in the space of time (a night) mentioned in the Bible. Besides my own judgment and conclusions, I had authority on the spot, in my Bedouin Toualeb, who talked of it with as much certainty as if he had seen it himself; and by the waning light of the moon, pointed out the metes and bounds according to the tradition received from his fathers."

Mr. Stephens is here greatly in error, and has placed himself in direct opposition to all authority on the subject. It is quite evident that, since the days of the miracle, the sea *has* "greatly changed" round the head of the gulf. It is now several feet lower, as appears from the alluvial condition of several bitter lakes in the vicinity. On this topic Niebuhr, who examined the matter with his accustomed learning, acumen, and perseverance, is indisputable authority. But he merely agrees with all the most able writers on this head. The passage occurred at Suez. The chief arguments sustaining this position are deduced from the ease by which the miracle could have been wrought, on a sea so shaped, by means of a strong wind blowing from the northeast.

Resuming his journey to the southward, our traveller passed safely through a barren and mountainous region, bare of verdure, and destitute of water, in about seven days, to Mount Sinai. It is to be regretted that, in his account of a country so little traversed as this peninsula, Mr. Stephens has not entered more into detail. Upon his adventures at the Holy Mountain, which are of great interest, he dwells somewhat at length.

At Akaba he met the Sheik as by agreement. A horse of the best breed of Arabia was provided; and, although suffering from ill health, he proceeded manfully through the desert to Petra and Mount Hor. The difficulties of the route proved to be chiefly those arising from the rapacity of his friend, the Sheik of Akaba, who threw a thousand impediments in his way with the purpose of magnifying the importance of the service rendered, and obtaining, in consequence, the larger allowance of *bakhshish*.

The account given of Petra agrees in all important particulars with those rendered by the very few travellers who had previously visited it. With these accounts our readers are sufficiently acquainted. The singular character of the city, its vast antiquity, its utter loss, for more than a thousand years, to the eyes of the civilized world, and, above all, the solemn denunciations of prophecy regarding it, have combined to invest these ruins with an interest beyond that of any others in existence, and to render what has been written concerning them familiar knowledge to nearly every individual who reads.

Leaving Petra, after visiting Mount Hor, Mr. Stephens returned to the valley of El-Ghor, and fell into the caravan route for Gaza, which crosses the valley obliquely. Coming out from the ravine among the mountains to the westward, he here left the road to Gaza, and pushed immediately on to Hebron. This distance (between the Gaza route and Hebron) is, we believe, the only positively *new* route accomplished by our American tourist. We understand that, in 1826, Messieurs Strangeways and Anson passed over the ground, on the Gaza road from Petra, to the point where it deviates for Hebron. On

the part of Mr. Stephens's course, which we have thus designated as new, it is well known that a great public road existed in the later days of the Roman empire, and that several cities were located immediately upon it. Mr. Stephens discovered some ruins, but his state of health, unfortunately, prevented a minute investigation. Those which he encountered are represented as forming rude and shapeless masses; there were no columns, no blocks of marble, or other large stones, indicating architectural greatness. The Pentinger Tables place Helusa in this immediate vicinity, and, but for the character of the ruins seen, we might have supposed them to be the remnants of that city.

The latter part of our author's second volume is occupied with his journeyings in the Holy Land, and, principally, with an account of his visit to Jerusalem. What relates to the Dead Sea we are induced to consider as, upon the whole, the most interesting, if not the most important portion of his book. It was his original intention to circumnavigate this lake, but the difficulty of procuring a boat proved an obstacle not to be surmounted. He traversed, nevertheless, no little extent of its shores, bathed in it, saw distinctly that the Jordan *does* mingle with its waters, and that birds floated upon it, and flew over its surface.

But it is time that we conclude. Mr. Stephens passed through Samaria and Galilee, stopping at Nablous, the ancient Sychem; the burial-place of the patriarch Joseph; and the ruins of Sebaste; crossed the battle-plain of Jezreel; ascended Mount Tabor; visited Nazareth, the lake of Genesareth, the cities of Tiberias and Saphet, Mount Carmel, Acre, Sour, and Sidon. At Beyroot he took passage for Alexandria, and thence finally returned to Europe.

The volumes are written in general with a freedom, a frankness, and an utter absence of pretension, which will secure them the respect and good-will of all parties. The author professes to have compiled his narrative merely from "brief notes and recollections," admitting that he has probably fallen into errors regarding facts and impressions — errors he has been prevented from seeking out and correcting by the urgency of other occupations since his return. We have, therefore, thought it quite as well not to trouble our readers, in this cursory review, with references to parallel travels, now familiar, and whose merits and demerits are sufficiently well understood.

We take leave of Mr. Stephens with sentiments of hearty respect. We hope it is not the last time we shall hear from him. He is a traveller with whom we shall like to take other journeys. Equally free from the exaggerated sentimentality of Chateaubriand, or the sublimated, the *too French* enthusiasm of Lamartine on the one hand, and on the other from the degrading spirit of utilitarianism, which sees in mountains and waterfalls only quarries and manufacturing sites, Mr. Stephens writes like a man of good sense and sound feeling.

IRVING'S "ASTORIA"

MR. IRVING'S acquaintance at Montreal, many years since, with some of the principal partners of the great Northwest Fur Company, was the means of interesting him deeply in the varied concerns of trappers, hunters, and Indians, and in all the adventurous details connected with the commerce in peltries. Not long after his return from his late tour to the prairies, he held a conversation with his friend, Mr. John Jacob Astor, of New York, in relation to an enterprise set on foot, and conducted by that gentleman, about the year 1812, — an enterprise having for its object a participation, on the most extensive scale, in the fur trade carried on with the Indians in all the western and northwestern regions of North America. Finding Mr. Irving fully alive to the exciting interest of this subject, Mr. Astor was induced to express a regret that the true nature and extent of the enterprise, together with its great national character and importance, had never been generally comprehended; and a wish that Mr. Irving would undertake to give an account of it. To this he consented. All the papers relative to the matter were submitted to his inspection; and the volumes now before us (two well-sized octavos) are the result. The work has been accomplished in a masterly manner — the modesty of the title affording no indication of the fulness, comprehensiveness, and beauty, with

which a long and entangled series of detail, collected necessarily from a mass of vague and imperfect data, has been wrought into completeness and unity.

Supposing our readers acquainted with the main features of the original fur trade in America, we shall not follow Mr. Irving in his vivid account of the primitive French Canadian merchant, his jovial establishments and dependants — of the licensed traders, missionaries, "voyageurs," and "coureurs des bois" — of the British Canadian fur merchant — of the rise of the great Company of the "Northwest," its constitution and internal trade, its parliamentary hall and banqueting room, its boating, its huntings, its wassailings, and other magnificent feudal doings in the wilderness. It was the British Mackinaw Company, we presume (a company established in rivalry of the "Northwest"), the *scene* of whose main operations first aroused the attention of our government. Its chief factory was established at Michilimackinac, and sent forth its perogues, by Green Bay, Fox River, and the Wisconsin, to the Mississippi, and thence to all its tributary streams — in this way hoping to monopolize the trade with all the Indian tribes on the southern and western waters of our own territory, as the "Northwest" had monopolized it along the waters of the north. Of course, we now began to view with a jealous eye, and to make exertions for counteracting, the influence hourly acquired over our own aborigines by these immense combinations of foreigners. In 1796, the United States sent out agents to establish rival trading houses on the frontier, and thus, by supplying the wants of the Indians, to link their interests with ours, and to divert the trade, if possible, into national channels. The enter-

prise failed — being, we suppose, inefficiently conducted and supported; and the design was never afterwards attempted until by the individual means and energy of Mr. Astor.

John Jacob Astor was born in Waldorf, a German village, near Heidelberg, on the banks of the Rhine. While yet a youth, he foresaw that he would arrive at great wealth, and, leaving home, took his way, alone, to London, where he found himself at the close of the American Revolution. An elder brother being in the United States, he followed him there. In January, 1784, he arrived in Hampton Roads, with some little merchandise suited to the American market. On the passage, he had become acquainted with a countryman of his, a furrier, from whom he derived much information in regard to furs, and the manner of conducting the trade. Subsequently, he accompanied this gentleman to New York, and, by his advice, invested the proceeds of his merchandise in peltries. With these, he sailed to London, and, having disposed of his adventure advantageously, he returned the same year (1784) to New York, with a view of settling in the United States, and prosecuting the business thus commenced. Mr. Astor's beginnings in this way were necessarily small — but his perseverance was indomitable, his integrity unimpeachable, and his economy of the most rigid kind. "To these," says Mr. Irving, "were added an aspiring spirit, that always looked upward; a genius bold, fertile, and expansive; a sagacity quick to grasp and convert every circumstance to its advantage, and a singular and never wavering confidence of signal success." These opinions are more than re-echoed by the whole crowd of Mr. Astor's numerous acquaint-

ances and friends, and are most strongly insisted upon by those who have the pleasure of knowing him best.

In the United States, the fur trade was not yet sufficiently organized to form a regular line of business. Mr. Astor made annual visits to Montreal for the purpose of buying peltries; and, as no direct trade was permitted from Canada to any country but England, he shipped them, when bought, immediately to London. This difficulty being removed, however, by the treaty of 1795, he made a contract for furs with the Northwest Company, and imported them from Montreal into the United States — thence shipping a portion to different parts of Europe, as well as to the principal market in China.

By the treaty just spoken of, the British possessions on our side of the Lakes were given up, and an opening made for the American fur-trader on the confines of Canada, and within the territories of the United States. Here, Mr. Astor, about the year 1807, adventured largely on his own account; his increased capital now placing him among the chief of American merchants. The influence of the Mackinaw Company, however, proved too much for him, and he was induced to consider the means of entering into successful competition. He was aware of the wish of the Government to concentrate the fur-trade within its boundaries in the hands of its own citizens; and he now offered, if national aid or protection should be afforded, "to turn the whole of the trade into American channels." He was invited to unfold his plans, and they were warmly approved, but, we believe, little more. The countenance of the Government was, nevertheless, of much importance, and, in

1809, he procured, from the legislature of New York, a charter, incorporating a company, under the name of the "American Fur Company," with a capital of one million of dollars, and the privilege of increasing it to two. He himself constituted the Company, and furnished the capital. The board of directors was merely nominal, and the whole business was conducted with his own resources, and according to his own will.

We here pass over Mr. Irving's lucid, although brief account of the fur-trade in the Pacific, of Russian and American enterprise on the northwestern coast, and of the discovery by Captain Gray, in 1792, of the mouth of the river Columbia. He proceeds to speak of Capt. Jonathan Carver, of the British provincial army. In 1763, shortly after the acquisition of the Canadas by Great Britain, this gentleman projected a journey across the continent, between the forty-third and forty-sixth degrees of northern latitude, to the shores of the Pacific. His objects were "to ascertain the breadth of the continent at its broadest part, and to determine on some place on the shores of the Pacific, where government might establish a post to facilitate the discovery of a Northwest passage, or a communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean." He failed twice in individual attempts to accomplish this journey. In 1774, Richard Whitworth, a member of Parliament, came into this scheme of Captain Carver's. These two gentlemen determined to take with them fifty or sixty men, artificers and mariners, to proceed up one of the branches of the Missouri, find the source of the Oregon (the Columbia), and sail down the river to its mouth. Here, a fort was to be erected, and the vessels built

necessary to carry into execution their purposed discoveries by sea. The British Government sanctioned the plan, and everything was ready for the undertaking, when the American Revolution prevented it.

The expedition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie is well known. In 1793, he crossed the continent, and reached the Pacific Ocean in latitude 52° 20′ 48″. In latitude 52° 30′, he partially descended a river flowing to the south, and which he erroneously supposed to be the Columbia. Some years afterwards, he published an account of his journey, and suggested the policy of opening an intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and forming regular establishments "through the interior and at both extremes, as well as along the coasts and islands." Thus, he thought the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained from latitude 48° north to the pole, excepting that portion held by the Russians. As to the "American adventurers" along the coast, he spoke of them as entitled to but little consideration. "They would instantly disappear," he said, "before a well-regulated trade." Owing to the jealousy existing between the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Company, this idea of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's was never carried into execution.

The successful attempt of Messieurs Lewis and Clarke was accomplished, it will be remembered, in 1804. Their course was that proposed by Captain Carver in 1774. They passed up the Missouri to its head waters, crossed the Rocky Mountains, discovered the source of the Columbia, and followed that river down to its mouth. Here they spent the winter, and retraced their steps in the spring. Their reports declared it practicable to establish a line of communica-

tion across the continent, and first inspired Mr. Astor with the design of "grasping with his individual hands this great enterprise, which, for years, had been dubiously yet desirously contemplated by powerful associations and maternal governments."

His scheme was gradually matured. Its main features were as follows. A line of trading posts was to be established along the Missouri and Columbia, to the mouth of the latter, where was to be founded the chief mart. On all the tributary streams throughout this immense route were to be situated inferior posts trading directly with the Indians for their peltries. All these posts would draw upon the mart at the Columbia for their supplies of goods, and would send thither the furs collected. At this latter place also, were to be built and fitted out coasting vessels, for the purpose of trading along the northwest coast, returning with the proceeds of their voyages to the same general rendezvous. In this manner, the whole Indian trade, both of the coast and the interior, would converge to one point. To this point, in continuation of his plan, Mr. Astor proposed to despatch, every year, a ship with the necessary supplies. She would receive the peltries collected, carry them to Canton, there invest the proceeds in merchandise, and return to New York.

Another point was also to be attended to. In coasting to the northwest, the ship would be brought into contact with the Russian Fur Company's establishments in that quarter; and, as a rivalry might ensue, it was politic to conciliate the good-will of that body. It depended chiefly, for its supplies, upon transient trading vessels from the United States. The owners of these vessels, having nothing beyond their indi-

vidual interests to consult, made no scruple of furnishing the natives with fire-arms, and were thus productive of much injury. To this effect, the Russian Government had remonstrated with the United States, urging to have the traffic in arms prohibited — but, no municipal law being infringed, our Government could not interfere. Still, it was anxious not to offend Russia, and applied to Mr. Astor for information as to the means of remedying the evil, knowing him to be well versed in all the concerns of the trade in question. This application suggested to him the idea of paying a regular visit to the Russian settlements with his annual ship. Thus, being kept regularly in supplies, they would be independent of the casual traders, who would, consequently, be excluded from the coast. This whole scheme Mr. Astor communicated to President Jefferson, soliciting the countenance of Government. The cabinet "joined in warm approbation of the plan, and held out assurance of every protection that could, consistently with general policy, be afforded."

In speaking of the motives which actuated Mr. Astor in an enterprise so extensive, Mr. Irving, we are willing to believe, has done that high-minded gentleman no more than the simplest species of justice. "He was already," says our author, "wealthy beyond the ordinary desires of man, but he now aspired to that honorable fame which is awarded to men of similar scope of mind, who, by their great commercial enterprises, have enriched nations, peopled wilder nesses, and extended the bounds of empire. He considered his projected establishment at the mouth of the Columbia, as the emporium to an immense commerce; as a colony that would form the germ of a

wide civilization; that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains, and spread it along the shores of the Pacific, as it already animated the shores of the Atlantic."

A few words in relation to the Northwest Company. This body, following out in part the suggestion of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, had already established a few trading posts on the coast of the Pacific, in a region lying about two degrees north of the Columbia — thus throwing itself between the Russian and American territories. They would contend with Mr. Astor at an immense disadvantage, of course. They had no good post for the receipt of supplies by sea; and must get them with great risk, trouble, and expense, over land. Their peltries also would have to be taken home the same way — for they were not at liberty to interfere with the East India Company's monopoly, by shipping them directly to China. Mr. Astor would therefore greatly undersell them in that, the principal market. Still, as any competition would prove detrimental to both parties, Mr. Astor made known his plans to the Northwest Company, proposing to interest them one-third in his undertaking. The British Company, however, had several reasons for declining the proposition — not the least forcible of which, we presume, was their secret intention to push on a party forthwith, and forestall their rival in establishing a settlement at the mouth of the Columbia.

In the mean time Mr. Astor did not remain idle. His first care was to procure proper coadjutors, and he was induced to seek them principally from among such clerks of the Northwest Company as were dissatisfied with their situation in that body — having served out their probationary term, and being still,

through want of influence, without a prospect of speedy promotion. From among these (generally men of capacity and experience in their particular business), Mr. Astor obtained the services of Mr. Alexander M'Kay (who had accompanied Sir Alexander Mackenzie in both of his expeditions), Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, and Mr. Duncan M'Dougal. Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, a native citizen of New Jersey, and a gentleman of great worth, was afterwards selected by Mr. Astor as his chief agent, and as the representative of himself at the contemplated establishment. In June, 1810, "articles of agreement were entered into between Mr. Astor and these four gentlemen, acting for themselves, and for the several persons who had already agreed to become, or should thereafter become, associated under the firm of 'The Pacific Fur Company.'" This agreement stipulated that Mr. Astor was to be the head of the Company, to manage its affairs at New York, and to furnish everything requisite for the enterprise at first cost and charges, provided an advance of more than four hundred thousand dollars should not at any time be involved. The stock was to consist of a hundred shares, Mr. Astor taking fifty, the rest being divided among the other partners and their associates. A general meeting was to be held annually at Columbia River, where absent members might vote by proxy. The association was to continue twenty years — but might be dissolved within the first five years, if found unprofitable. For these five years Mr. Astor agreed to bear all the loss that might be incurred. An agent, appointed for a like term, was to reside at the main establishment, and Mr. Hunt was the person first selected.

Mr. Astor determined to begin his enterprise with two expeditions — one by sea, the other by land. The former was to carry out everything necessary for the establishment of a fortified post at the mouth of the Columbia. The latter, under the conduct of Mr. Hunt, was to proceed up the Missouri and across the Rocky Mountains to the same point. In the course of this overland journey, the most practicable line of communication would be explored, and the best situations noted for the location of trading rendezvous. Following Mr. Irving in our brief summary of his narrative, we will now give some account of the first of these expeditions.

A ship was provided called the "Tonquin," of two hundred and ninety tons, with ten guns, and twenty men. Lieutenant Jonathan Thorn of the United States navy, being on leave of absence, received the command. He was a man of courage, and had distinguished himself in the Tripolitan war. Four of the partners went in the ship — M'Kay and M'Dougal, of whom we have already spoken, and Messieurs David and Robert Stuart, new associates in the firm. M'Dougal was empowered to act as the proxy of Mr. Astor in the absence of Mr. Hunt. Twelve clerks were also of the party. These were bound to the service of the company for five years, and were to receive one hundred dollars a year, payable at the expiration of the term, with an annual equipment of clothing to the amount of forty dollars. By promises of future promotion, their interests were identified with those of Mr. Astor. Thirteen Canadian *voyageurs*, and several artisans, completed the ship's company. On the eighth of September, 1810, the "Tonquin" put to sea. Of her voyage to the mouth of the

Columbia, Mr. Irving has given a somewhat ludicrous account. Thorn, the stern, straightforward officer of the navy, having few ideas beyond those of duty and discipline, and looking with supreme contempt upon the motley "lubbers" who formed the greater part of his company, is painted with the easy yet spirited pencil of an artist indeed; while M'Dougal, the shrewd Scotch partner, bustling, yet pompous, and impressed with lofty notions of his own importance as proxy for Mr. Astor, is made as supremely ridiculous as possible, with as little apparent effort as can well be imagined; — the portraits, however, carry upon their faces the evidence of their own authenticity. The voyage is prosecuted amid a series of petty quarrels, and cross purposes, between the captain and his crew, and, occasionally, between Mr. M'Kay and Mr. M'Dougal. The contests between the two latter gentlemen were brief, it appears, although violent. "Within fifteen minutes," says Captain Thorn in a letter to Mr. Astor, "they would be caressing each other like children." The "Tonquin" doubled Cape Horn on Christmas day, arrived at Owyhee on the eleventh of February, took on board fresh provisions, sailed again with twelve Sandwich Islanders on the twenty-eighth, and on the twenty-second of March arrived at the mouth of the Columbia. In seeking a passage across the bar, a boat and nine men were lost among the breakers. On the way from Owyhee a violent storm occurred; and the bickerings still continued between the partners and the captain — the latter, indeed, grievously suspecting the former of a design to depose him.

The Columbia, for about forty miles from its mouth, is, strictly speaking, an estuary, varying in breadth from three to seven miles, and indented by deep bays.

Shoals and other obstructions render the navigation dangerous. Leaving this broad portion of the stream in the progress upwards, we find the mouth of the river proper — which is about half a mile wide. The entrance to the estuary from sea is bounded on the south by a long, low, and sandy beach stretching into the ocean, and called Point Adams. On the northern side of the frith is Cape Disappointment, a steep promontory. Immediately east of this cape is Baker's Bay, and within this the "Tonquin" came to anchor.

Jealousies still continued between the captain and the worthy M'Dougal, who could come to no agreement in regard to the proper location for the contemplated establishment. On April the fifth, without troubling himself farther with the opinions of his coadjutors, Mr. Thorn landed in Baker's Bay, and began operations. At this summary proceeding, the partners were, of course, in high dudgeon, and an open quarrel seemed likely to ensue, to the serious detriment of the enterprise. These difficulties, however, were at length arranged, and finally, on the twelfth of April, a settlement was commenced at a point of land called Point George, on the southern shore of the frith. Here was a good harbor, where vessels of two hundred tons might anchor within fifty yards of the shore. In honor of the chief partner, the new post received the title of *Astoria*. After much delay, the portion of the cargo destined for the post was landed, and the "Tonquin" left free to proceed on her voyage. She was to coast to the north, to trade for peltries at the different harbors, and to touch at Astoria on her return in the autumn. Mr. M'Kay went in her as supercargo, and a Mr. Lewis as ship's clerk. On the morning of the fifth of June she stood out to sea, the

whole number of persons on board amounting to three and twenty. In one of the outer bays Captain Thorn procured the services of an Indian named Lamazee, who had already made two voyages along the coast, and who agreed to accompany him as interpreter. In a few days the ship arrived at Vancouver's Island, and came to anchor in the harbor of Neweetee, much against the advice of the Indian, who warned Captain Thorn of the perfidious character of the natives. The result was the merciless butchery of the whole crew, with the exception of the interpreter and Mr. Lewis, the ship's clerk. The latter, finding himself mortally wounded and without companions, blew up the ship and perished with more than a hundred of the enemy. Lamazee, getting among the Indians, escaped, and was the means of bearing the news of the disaster to Astoria. In relating at length the thrilling details of this catastrophe, Mr. Irving takes occasion to comment on the headstrong, although brave and strictly honorable character of Captain Thorn. The danger and folly, on the part of agents, in disobeying the matured instructions of those who deliberately plan extensive enterprises, such as that of Mr. Astor, is also justly and forcibly shown. The misfortune here spoken of arose, altogether, from a disregard of Mr. Astor's often repeated advice — to admit but few Indians on board the "Tonquin" at one time. Her loss was a serious blow to the infant establishment at Astoria. To this post let us now return.

The natives inhabiting the borders of the estuary were divided into four tribes, of which the Chinooks were the principal. Comcomly, a one-eyed Indian, was their chief. These tribes resembled each other in nearly every respect, and were, no doubt, of a com-

mon stock. They lived chiefly by fishing — the Columbia and its tributary streams abounding in fine salmon, and a variety of other fish. A trade in peltries, but to no great amount, was immediately commenced and carried on. Much disquiet was occasioned at the post by a rumor among the Indians that thirty white men had appeared on the banks of the Columbia, and were building houses at the second rapids. It was feared that these were an advance party of the North-west Company endeavoring to seize upon the upper parts of the river, and thus forestall Mr. Astor in the trade of the surrounding country. Bloody feuds in this case might be anticipated, such as had prevailed between rival Companies in former times. The intelligence of the Indians proved true — the "Northwest" had erected a trading-house on the Spokan River, which falls into the north branch of the Columbia. The Astorians could do little to oppose them in their present reduced state as to numbers. It was resolved, however, to advance a counter-check to the post on the Spokan, and Mr. David Stuart prepared to set out for this purpose with eight men and a small assortment of goods. On the fifteenth of July, when this expedition was about starting, a canoe, manned with nine white men, and bearing the British flag, entered the harbor. They proved to be the party despatched by the rival Company to anticipate Mr. Astor in the settlement at the mouth of the river. Mr. David Thompson, their leader, announced himself as a partner of the "Northwest" — but otherwise gave a very peaceable account of himself. It appears, however, from information subsequently derived from other sources, that he had hurried with a desperate haste across the mountains, calling at all the Indian

villages in his march, presenting them with British flags, and "proclaiming formally that he took possession of the country for the Northwest Company, and in the name of the king of Great Britain." His plan was defeated, it seems, by the desertion of a great portion of his followers, and it was thought probable that he now merely descended the river with a view of reconnoitring. M'Dougal treated the gentlemen with great kindness, and supplied them with goods and provisions for their journey back across the mountains — this much against the wishes of Mr. David Stuart, "who did not think the object of their visit entitled them to any favor." A letter for Mr. Astor was intrusted to Thompson.

On the twenty-third of July, the party for the region of the Spokan set out, and after a voyage of much interest, succeeded in establishing the first interior trading-post of the Company. It was situated on a point of land about three miles long and two broad, formed by the junction of the Oakinagan with the Columbia. In the mean time the Indians near Astoria began to evince a hostile disposition, and a reason for this altered demeanor was soon after found in the report of the loss of the "Tonquin." Early in August the settlers received intelligence of her fate. They now found themselves in a perilous situation, a mere handful of men, on a savage coast, and surrounded by barbarous enemies. From their dilemma they were relieved, for the present, by the ingenuity of M'Dougal. The natives had a great dread of the small-pox, which had appeared among them a few years before, sweeping off entire tribes. They believed it an evil either inflicted upon them by the Great Spirit, or brought among them by the white

men. Seizing upon this latter idea, M'Dougal assembled several of the chieftains whom he believed to be inimical, and informing them that he had heard of the treachery of their northern brethren in regard to the "Tonquin," produced from his pocket a small bottle. "The white men among you," said he, "are few in number, it is true, but they are mighty in medicine. See here! In this bottle I hold the small-pox safely corked up; I have but to draw the cork and let loose the pestilence, to sweep man, woman, and child from the face of the earth!" The chiefs were dismayed. They represented to the "Great Small-Pox Chief" that they were the firmest friends of the white men, that they had nothing to do with the villains who murdered the crew of the "Tonquin," and that it would be unjust, in uncorking the bottle, to destroy the innocent with the guilty. M'Dougal was convinced. He promised not to uncork it until some overt act should compel him to do so. In this manner tranquillity was restored to the settlement. A large house was now built, and the frame of a schooner put together. She was named the "Dolly," and was the first American vessel launched on the coast. But our limits will not permit us to follow too minutely the details of the enterprise. The adventurers kept up their spirits, sending out occasional foraging parties in the "Dolly," and looking forward to the arrival of Mr. Hunt. So wore away the year 1811 at the little post of Astoria. We now come to speak of the expedition by land.

This, it will be remembered, was to be conducted by Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, a native of New Jersey. He is represented as scrupulously upright, of amiable disposition, and agreeable manners. He had never

been in the heart of the wilderness, but, having been for some time engaged in commerce at St. Louis, furnishing Indian traders with goods, he had acquired much knowledge of the trade at second hand. Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, another partner, was associated with him. He had been ten years in the interior, in the service of the Northwest Company, and had much practical experience in all Indian concerns. In July, 1810, the two gentlemen repaired to Montreal, where everything requisite to the expedition could be procured. Here they met with many difficulties — some of which were thrown in their way by their rivals. Having succeeded, however, in laying in a supply of ammunition, provisions, and Indian goods, they embarked all on board a large boat, and, with a very inefficient crew, the best to be procured, took their departure from St. Anne's, near the extremity of the island of Montreal. Their course lay up the Ottawa, and along a range of small lakes and rivers. On the twenty-second of July, they arrived at Mackinaw, situated on Mackinaw Island, at the confluence of Lakes Huron and Michigan. Here it was necessary to remain some time to complete the assortment of Indian goods, and engage more *voyageurs*. While waiting to accomplish these objects, Mr. Hunt was joined by Mr. Ramsay Crooks, a gentleman whom he had invited, by letter, to engage as a partner in the expedition. He was a native of Scotland, had served under the Northwest Company, and been engaged in private trading adventures among the various tribes of the Missouri. Mr. Crooks represented, in forcible terms, the dangers to be apprehended from the Indians — especially the Blackfeet and Sioux — and it was agreed to increase the number

of the party to sixty upon arriving at St. Louis. Thirty was its strength upon leaving Mackinaw. This occurred on the twelfth of August. The expedition pursued the usual route of the fur-trader — by Green Bay, Fox and Wisconsin rivers, to Prairie du Chien, and thence down the Mississippi to St. Louis, where they landed on the third of September. Here, Mr. Hunt met with some opposition from an association called the Missouri Fur Company, and especially from its leading partner, a Mr. Manuel Lisa. This Company had a capital of about forty thousand dollars, and employed about two hundred and fifty men. Its object was to establish posts along the upper part of the river, and monopolize the trade. Mr. Hunt proceeded to strengthen himself against competition. He secured to Mr. Astor the services of Mr. Joseph Miller. This gentleman had been an officer of the United States Army, but had resigned on being refused a furlough, and taken to trading with the Indians. He joined the association as a partner; and, on account of his experience and general acquirements, Mr. Hunt considered him a valuable coadjutor. Several boatmen and hunters were also now enlisted, but not until after a delay of several weeks. This delay, and the previous difficulties at Montreal and Mackinaw, had thrown Mr. Hunt much behind his original calculations, so that he found it would be impossible to effect his voyage up the Missouri during the present season. There was every likelihood that the river would be closed before the party could reach its upper waters. To winter, however, at St. Louis, would be expensive. Mr. Hunt, therefore, determined to push up on his way as far as possible, to some point where game might be found in abun-

dance, and there take up his quarters until spring. On the twenty-first of October, he set out. The party were distributed in three boats — two large Schenectady barges, and a keel boat. By the sixteenth of November, they reached the mouth of the Nodowa, a distance of four hundred and fifty miles, where they set up their winter quarters. Here, Mr. Robert M'Lellan, at the invitation of Mr. Hunt, joined the association as a partner. He was a man of vigorous frame, of restless and imperious temper, and had distinguished himself as a partisan under General Wayne. John Day also joined the company at this place — a tall and athletic hunter from the backwoods of Virginia. Leaving the main body at Nodowa, Mr. Hunt now returned to St. Louis for reinforcement. He was again impeded by the machinations of the Missouri Fur Company, but finally succeeded in enlisting one hunter, some *voyageurs*, and a Sioux interpreter, Pierre Dorion. With these, after much difficulty, he got back to the encampment on the seventeenth of April. Soon after this period, the voyage up the river was resumed. The party now consisted of nearly sixty persons — five partners, Hunt, Crooks, M'Kenzie, Miller, and M'Lellan; one clerk, John Reed; forty Canadian *voyageurs;* and several hunters. They embarked in four boats, one of which, of a large size, mounted a swivel and two howitzers.

We do not intend, of course, to proceed with our travellers throughout the vast series of adventure encountered in their passage through the wilderness. To the curious in these particulars, we recommend the book itself. No details more intensely exciting are to be found in any work of travels within our

knowledge. At times full of life and enjoying the whole luxury to be found in the career of the hunter — at times suffering every extremity of fatigue, hunger, thirst, anxiety, terror, and despair — Mr. Hunt still persisted in his journey, and finally brought it to a successful termination. A bare outline of the route pursued is all we can attempt.

Proceeding up the river, our party arrived, on the twenty-eighth of April, at the mouth of the Nebraska, or Platte, the largest tributary of the Missouri, and about six hundred miles above its junction with the Mississippi. They now halted for two days, to supply themselves with oars and poles from the tough wood of the ash, which is not to be found higher up the river. Upon the second of May, two of the hunters insisted upon abandoning the expedition, and returning to St Louis. On the tenth, the party reached the Omaha village, and encamped in its vicinity. This village is about eight hundred and thirty miles above St. Louis, and on the west bank of the stream. Three men here deserted, but their place was luckily supplied by three others, who were prevailed upon, by liberal promises, to enlist. On the fifteenth, Mr. Hunt left Omaha, and proceeded. Not long afterwards, a canoe was descried navigated by two white men. They proved to be two adventurers, who, for some years past, had been hunting and trapping near the head of the Missouri. Their names were Jones and Carson. They were now on their way to St. Louis, but readily abandoned their voyage, and turned their faces again toward the Rocky Mountains. On the twenty-third, Mr. Hunt received, by a special messenger, a letter from Mr. Manuel Lisa, the leading partner of the Missouri Fur Company, and the gentleman who ren-

dered him so many disservices at St. Louis. He had left that place, with a large party, three weeks after Mr. Hunt, and, having heard rumors of hostile intentions on the part of the Sioux, a much-dreaded tribe of Indians, made great exertions to overtake him, that they might pass through the dangerous part of the river together. Mr. Hunt, however, was justly suspicious of the Spaniard, and pushed on. At the village of the Poncas, about a league south of the river Quicourt, he stopped only long enough to procure a supply of dried buffalo-meat. On the morning of the twenty-fifth, it was discovered that Jones and Carson had deserted. They were pursued, but in vain. The next day, three white men were observed, in two canoes, descending the river. They proved to be three Kentucky hunters — Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Rizner. They also had passed several years in the upper wilderness, and were now on their way home, but willingly turned back with the expedition. Information derived from these recruits induced Mr. Hunt to alter his route. Hitherto, he had intended to follow the course pursued by Messieurs Lewis and Clarke — ascending the Missouri to its forks, and thence, by land, across the mountains. He was informed, however, that, in so doing, he would have to pass through the country of the Blackfeet, a savage tribe of Indians, exasperated against the whites, on account of the death of one of their men by the hands of Captain Lewis. Robinson advised a more southerly route. This would carry them over the mountains about where the head waters of the Platte and the Yellowstone take their rise, a much more practicable pass than that of Lewis and Clarke. To this council, Mr. Hunt agreed, and resolved to

leave the Missouri at the village of the Arickaras, at which they would arrive in a few days. On the first of June, they reached "the great bend" of the river, which here winds for about thirty miles round a circular peninsula, the neck of which is not above two thousand yards across. On the morning of June the third, the party were overtaken by Lisa, much to their dissatisfaction. The meeting was, of course, far from cordial, but an outward appearance of civility was maintained for two days. On the third, a quarrel took place, which was near terminating seriously. It was, however, partially adjusted, and the rival parties coasted along opposite sides of the river, in sight of each other. On the twelfth of June, they reached the village of the Arickaras, between the forty-sixth and forty-seventh parallels of north latitude, and about fourteen hundred and thirty miles above the mouth of the Missouri. In accomplishing thus much of his journey, Mr. Hunt had not failed to meet with a crowd of difficulties, at which we have not even hinted. He was frequently in extreme peril from large bodies of the Sioux, and, at one time, it was a mere accident alone which prevented the massacre of the whole party.

At the Arickara village, our adventurers were to abandon their boats, and proceed westward across the wilderness. Horses were to be purchased from the Indians; who could not, however, furnish them in sufficient numbers. In this dilemma, Lisa offered to purchase the boats, now no longer of use, and to pay for them in horses, to be obtained at a fort belonging to the Missouri Fur Company, and situated at the Mandan villages, about a hundred and fifty miles further up the river. A bargain was made, and Mes-

sieurs Lisa and Crooks went for the horses, returning with them in about a fortnight. At the Arickara village, if we understand, Mr. Hunt engaged the services of one Edward Rose. He enlisted, as interpreter when the expedition should reach the country of the Upsarokas or Crow Indians, among whom he had formerly resided. On the eighteenth of July, the party took up their line of march. They were still insufficiently provided with horses. The cavalcade consisted of eighty-two, most of them heavily laden with Indian goods, beaver traps, ammunition, and provisions. Each of the partners was mounted. As they took leave of Arickara, the veterans of Lisa's company, as well as Lisa himself, predicted the total destruction of our adventurers, amid the innumerable perils of the wilderness.

To avoid the Blackfeet Indians, a ferocious and implacable tribe, of which we have before spoken, the party kept a southwestern direction. This route took them across some of the tributary streams of the Missouri, and through immense prairies, bounded only by the horizon. Their progress was, at first, slow, and, Mr. Crooks falling sick, it was necessary to make a litter for him between two horses. On the twenty-third of the month, they encamped on the banks of a little stream, nicknamed Big River, where they remained several days, meeting with a variety of adventures. Among other things, they were enabled to complete their supply of horses from a band of the Cheyenne Indians. On the sixth of August, the journey was resumed, and they soon left the hostile region of the Sioux behind them. About this period, a plot was discovered on the part of the interpreter, Edward Rose. This villain had been tamper-

ing with the men, and proposed, upon arriving among his old acquaintances the Crows, to desert to the savages with as much booty as could be carried off. The matter was adjusted, however, and Mr. Rose, through the ingenuity of Mr. Hunt, quietly dismissed. On the thirteenth, Mr. Hunt varied his course to the westward, a route which soon brought him to a fork of the Little Missouri, and upon the skirts of the Black Mountains. These are an extensive chain, lying about a hundred miles east of the Rocky Mountains, stretching northeasterly from the south fork of the river Platte to the great north bend of the Missouri, and dividing the waters of the Missouri from those of the Mississippi and Arkansas. The travellers here supposed themselves to be about two hundred and fifty miles from the village of the Arickaras. Their more serious troubles now commenced. Hunger and thirst, with the minor difficulties of grizzly bears, beset them at every turn, as they attempted to force a passage through the rugged barriers in their path. At length, they emerged upon a stream of clear water, one of the forks of Powder River, and once more beheld wide meadows and plenty of buffalo. They ascended this stream about eighteen miles, directing their march towards a lofty mountain, which had been in sight since the seventeenth. They reached the base of this mountain, which proved to be a spur of the Rocky chain, on the thirtieth, having now come about four hundred miles since leaving Arickara.

For one or two days, they endeavored in vain to find a defile in the mountains. On the third of September, they made an attempt to force a passage to the westward, but soon became entangled among

rocks and precipices, which set all their efforts at defiance. They were now too in the region of the terrible Upsarokas, and encountered them at every step. They met also with friendly bands of Shoshonies and Flatheads. After a thousand troubles, they made some way upon their journey. On the ninth, they reached Wind River, a stream which gives its name to a range of mountains consisting of three parallel chains, eighty miles long and about twenty-five broad. "One of its peaks," says our author, "is probably fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea." For five days, Mr. Hunt followed up the course of Wind River, crossing and recrossing it. He had been assured by the three hunters who advised him to strike through the wilderness, that, by going on up the river, and crossing a single mountain ridge, he would come upon the head waters of the Columbia. The scarcity of game, however, determined him to pursue a different course. In the course of the day, after coming to this resolve, they perceived three mountain peaks, white with snow, and which were recognized by the hunters as rising just above a fork of the Columbia. These peaks were named the Pilot Knobs by Mr. Hunt. The travellers continued their course for about forty miles to the southwest, and, at length, found a river flowing to the west. This proved to be a branch of the Colorado. They followed its current for fifteen miles. On the eighteenth, abandoning its main course, they took a northwesterly direction for eight miles, and reached one of its little tributaries, issuing from the bosom of the mountains, and running through green meadows abounding in buffalo. Here, they encamped for several days, a little repose being necessary for both men and

horses. On the twenty-fourth, the journey was resumed. Fifteen miles brought them to a stream about fifty feet wide, which was recognized as one of the head waters of the Columbia. They kept along it for two days, during which it gradually swelled into a river of some size. At length, it was joined by another current, and both united swept off in an unimpeded stream, which, from its rapidity and turbulence, had received the appellation of Mad River. Down this, they anticipated an uninterrupted voyage, in canoes, to the point of their ultimate destination—but their hopes were very far from being realized.

The partners held a consultation. The three hunters who had hitherto acted as guides, knew nothing of the region to the west of the Rocky Mountains. It was doubtful whether Mad River could be navigated, and they could hardly resolve to abandon their horses upon an uncertainty. The vote, nevertheless, was for embarkation, and they proceeded to build the necessary vessels. In the mean time, Mr. Hunt, having now reached the head waters of the Columbia, reputed to abound in beaver, turned his thoughts to the main object of the expedition. Four men, Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Detayé, and Pierre Delaunay, were detached from the expedition, to remain and trap beaver by themselves in the wilderness. Having collected a sufficient quantity of peltries, they were to bring them to the *dépôt*, at the mouth of the Columbia, or to some intermediate post to be established by the company. These trappers had just departed, when two Snake Indians wandered into the camp, and declared the river to be unnavigable. Scouts sent out by Mr. Hunt finally confirmed this report. On the fourth of October, therefore, the

encampment was broken up, and the party proceeded to search for a post in possession of the Missouri Fur Company, and said to be somewhere in the neighborhood, upon the banks of another branch of the Columbia. This post they found without much difficulty. It was deserted — and our travellers gladly took possession of the rude buildings. The stream here found was upwards of a hundred yards wide. Canoes were constructed with all despatch. In the mean time, another detachment of trappers was cast loose in the wilderness. These were Robinson, Rizner, Hoback, Carr, and Mr. Joseph Miller. This latter, it will be remembered, was one of the partners — he threw up his share in the expedition, however, for a life of more perilous adventure. On the eighteenth of the month (October), fifteen canoes being completed, the voyagers embarked, leaving their horses in charge of the two Snake Indians, who were still in company.

In the course of the day, the party arrived at the junction of the stream upon which they floated, with Mad River. Here Snake River commences — the scene of a thousand disasters. After proceeding about four hundred miles, by means of frequent portages, and beset with innumerable difficulties of every kind, the adventurers were brought to a halt by a series of frightful cataracts, raging as far as the eye could reach, between stupendous ramparts of black rock, rising more than two hundred feet perpendicularly. This place they called the Caldron Linn. Here, Antoine Clappine, one of the *voyageurs*, perished amid the whirlpools, three of the canoes stuck immovably among the rocks, and one was swept away

with all the weapons and effects of four of the boatmen.

The situation of the party was now lamentable, indeed — in the heart of an unknown wilderness, at a loss what route to take, ignorant of their distance from the place of their destination, and with no human being near them from whom counsel might be taken. Their stock of provisions was reduced to five days' allowance, and famine stared them in the face. It was, therefore, more perilous to keep together than to separate. The goods and provisions, except a small supply for each man, were concealed in *caches* (holes dug in the earth), and the party were divided into several small detachments, which started off in different directions, keeping the mouth of the Columbia in view as their ultimate point of destination. From this post, they were still distant nearly a thousand miles, although this fact was unknown to them at the time.

On the twenty-first of January, after a series of almost incredible adventures, the division in which Mr. Hunt enrolled himself struck the waters of the Columbia, some distance below the junction of its two great branches, Lewis and Clarke rivers, and not far from the influx of the Wallah-Wallah. Since leaving the Caldron Linn, they had toiled two hundred and forty miles, through snowy wastes and precipitous mountains, and six months had now elapsed since their departure from the Arickara village, on the Missouri — their whole route from that point, according to their computation, having been seventeen hundred and fifty-one miles. Some vague intelligence was now received in regard to the other divisions of the party, and also of the settlers at the mouth of the

Columbia. On the thirty-first, Mr. Hunt reached the falls of the river, and encamped at the village of Wish-Ram. Here were heard tidings of the massacre on board the "Tonquin." On the fifth of February, having procured canoes with much difficulty, the adventurers departed from Wish-Ram, and, on the fifteenth, sweeping round an intervening cape, they came in sight of the long-desired *Astoria*. Among the first to greet them on their landing were some of their old comrades, who had parted from them at the Caldron Linn, and who had reached the settlement nearly a month before. Mr. Crooks and John Day, being unable to get on, had been left with some Indians in the wilderness — they afterwards came in. Carriere, a *voyageur*, who was also abandoned through the sternest necessity, was never heard of more. Jean Baptiste Prevost, likewise a *voyageur*, rendered frantic by famine, had been drowned in the Snake River. All parties had suffered the extremes of weariness, privation, and peril. They had travelled from St. Louis, thirty-five hundred miles. Let us now return to Mr. Astor.

As yet he had received no intelligence from the Columbia, and had to proceed upon the supposition that all had gone as he desired. He accordingly fitted out a fine ship, the "Beaver," of four hundred and ninety tons. Her cargo was assorted with a view to the supply of Astoria, the trade along the coast, and the wants of the Russian Fur Company. There embarked in her, for the settlement, a partner, five clerks, fifteen American laborers, and six Canadian *voyageurs*. Mr. John Clarke, the partner, was a native of the United States, although he had passed much of his life in the Northwest, having been em-

ployed in the fur trade since the age of sixteen. The clerks were, chiefly, young American gentlemen of good connections. Mr. Astor had selected this reinforcement with the design of securing an ascendency of American influence at Astoria, and rendering the association decidedly national. This, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, he had been unable to do in the commencement of his undertaking.

Captain Sowle, the commander of the "Beaver," was directed to touch at the Sandwich Islands, to inquire about the fortunes of the "Tonquin," and ascertain, if possible, whether the settlement had been effected at Astoria. If so, he was to enlist as many of the natives as possible and proceed. He was to use great caution in his approach to the mouth of the Columbia. If everything was found right, however, he was to land such part of his cargo as was intended for the post, and to sail for New Archangel with the Russian supplies. Having received furs in payment, he would return to Astoria, take in the peltries there collected, and make the best of his way to Canton. These were the strict letter of his instructions — a deviation from which was subsequently the cause of great embarrassment and loss, and contributed largely to the failure of the whole enterprise. The "Beaver" sailed on the tenth of October, 1811, and, after taking in twelve natives at the Sandwich Islands, reached the mouth of the Columbia, in safety, on the ninth of May, 1812. Her arrival gave life and vigor to the establishment, and afforded means of extending the operations of the Company, and founding a number of interior trading-posts.

It now became necessary to send despatches over land to Mr. Astor, at New York, an attempt at so

doing having been frustrated some time before by the hostility of the Indians at Wish-Ram. The task was confided to Mr. Robert Stuart, who, though he had never been across the mountains, had given evidence of his competency for such undertakings. He was accompanied by Ben Jones and John Day, Kentuckians; Andri Vallar and Francis Le Clerc, Canadians; and two of the partners, Messieurs M'Lellan and Crooks, who were desirous of returning to the Atlantic States. This little party set out on the twenty-ninth of June, and Mr. Irving accompanies them, in detail, throughout the whole of their long and dangerous wayfaring. As might be expected, they encountered misfortunes still more terrible than those before experienced by Mr. Hunt and his associates. The chief features of the journey were the illness of Mr. Crooks and the loss of all the horses of the party through the villany of the Upsarokas. This latter circumstance was the cause of excessive trouble and great delay. On the thirtieth of April, however, the party arrived, in fine health and spirits, at St. Louis, having been ten months in performing their perilous expedition. The route taken by Mr. Stuart coincided nearly with that of Mr. Hunt, as far as the Wind River Mountains. From this point, the former struck somewhat to the southeast, following the Nebraska to its junction with the Missouri.

War having at length broken out between the United States and England, Mr. Astor perceived that the harbor of New York would be blockaded, and the departure of the annual supply ship in the autumn prevented. In this emergency, he wrote to Captain Sowle, the commander of the "Beaver," addressing him at Canton. The letter directed him to proceed to

the factory, at the mouth of the Columbia, with such articles as the establishment might need, and to remain there subject to the orders of Mr. Hunt. In the mean time, nothing had yet been heard from the settlement. Still, not discouraged, Mr. Astor determined to send out another ship, although the risk of loss was so greatly enhanced that no insurance could be effected. The "Lark" was chosen — remarkable for her fast sailing. She put to sea on the sixth of March, 1813, under the command of Mr. Northrop, her mate — the officer first appointed to command her having shrunk from his engagement. Within a fortnight after her departure, Mr. Astor received intelligence that the Northwest Company had presented a memorial to Great Britain, stating the vast scope of the contemplated operations at Astoria, expressing a fear that, unless crushed, the settlement there would effect the downfall of their own fur trade, and advising that a force be sent against the colony. In consequence, the frigate "Phœbe" was ordered to convoy the armed ship "Isaac Todd," belonging to the Northwest Company, and provided with men and munitions for the formation of a new establishment. They were directed "to proceed together to the mouth of the Columbia, capture or destroy whatever American fortress they would find there, and plant the British flag on its ruins." Upon this matter's being represented to our government, the frigate "Adams," Captain Crane, was detailed for the protection of Astoria; and Mr. Astor proceeded to fit out a ship called the "Enterprise," to sail in company with the frigate, and freighted with additional supplies. Just, however, as the two vessels were ready, a reinforcement of seamen was wanted for Lake Ontario, and the crew

of the "Adams" were, necessarily, transferred to that service. Mr. Astor was about to send off his ship alone, when a British force made its appearance off the Hook, and New York was effectually blockaded. The "Enterprise," therefore, was unloaded and dismantled. We now return to the "Beaver."

This vessel, after leaving at Astoria that portion of her cargo destined for that post, sailed for New Archangel on the fourth of August, 1812. She arrived there on the nineteenth, meeting with no incidents of moment. A long time was now expended in negotiations with the drunken governor of the Russian fur colony — one Count Baranoff — and when they were finally completed, the month of October had arrived. Moreover, in payment for his supplies, Mr. Hunt was to receive seal-skins, and none were on the spot. It was necessary, therefore, to proceed to a seal-catching establishment belonging to the Russian Company at the Island of St. Paul, in the sea of Kamschatka. He set sail for this place on the fourth of October, after having wasted forty-five days at New Archangel. He arrived on the thirty-first of the month — by which time, according to his arrangement, he should have been back at Astoria. Now occurred great delay in getting the peltries on board; every pack being overhauled to prevent imposition. To make matters worse, the "Beaver" one night was driven off shore in a gale, and could not get back until the thirteenth of November. Having at length taken in the cargo and put to sea, Mr. Hunt was in some perplexity as to his course. The ship had been much injured in the late gale, and he thought it imprudent to attempt making the mouth of the Columbia in this boisterous time of the year. Moreover, the season was already much

advanced; and should he proceed to Astoria as originally intended, he might arrive at Canton so late as to find a bad market. Unfortunately, therefore, he determined to go at once to the Sandwich Islands, there await the arrival of the annual ship from New York, take passage in her to the settlement, and let the "Beaver" proceed on her voyage to China. It is but justice to add that he was mainly induced to this course by the timid representations of Captain Sowle. They reached Woahoo in safety, where the ship underwent the necessary repairs, and again put to sea on the first of January, 1813, leaving Mr. Hunt on the island.

At Canton, Captain Sowle found the letter of Mr. Astor, giving him information of the war, and directing him to convey the intelligence to Astoria. He wrote a reply, in which he declined complying with these orders, saying that he would wait for peace, and then return home. In the mean time Mr. Hunt waited in vain for the annual vessel. At length, about the twentieth of June, the ship "Albatross," Captain Smith, arrived from China, bringing the first news of the war to the Sandwich Islands. This ship Mr. Hunt chartered for two thousand dollars, to land him, with some supplies, at Astoria. He reached this post on the twentieth of August, where he found the affairs of the Company in a perishing condition, and the partners bent upon abandoning the settlement. To this resolution Mr. Hunt was finally brought to consent. There was a large stock of furs, however, at the factory, which it was necessary to get to a market, and a ship was required for this service. The "Albatross" was bound to the Marquesas, and thence to the Sandwich Islands; and it was resolved that Mr. Hunt

should sail in her in quest of a vessel, returning, if possible, by the first of January, and bringing with him a supply of provisions. He departed on the twenty-sixth of August, and reached the Marquesas without accident. Commodore Porter soon afterward arrived, bringing intelligence that the British frigate "Phœbe," with a store-ship mounted with battering pieces, together with the sloops of war "Cherub" and "Raccoon," had all sailed from Rio Janeiro, on the sixth of July, bound for the mouth of the Columbia. Mr. Hunt, after in vain attempting to purchase a whale-ship from Commodore Porter, started, on the twenty-third of November, for the Sandwich Islands, arriving on December the twentieth. Here he found Captain Northrop, of the "Lark," which had suffered shipwreck on the coast about the middle of March. The brig "Pedlar" was now purchased for ten thousand dollars, and, Captain Northrop being put in command of her, Mr. Hunt sailed for Astoria on the twenty-second of January, 1814, with the view of removing the property there, as speedily as possible, to the Russian settlements in the vicinity — these were Mr. Astor's orders sent out by the "Lark." On the twenty-eighth of February the brig anchored in the Columbia, when it was found that, on the twelfth of December, the British had taken possession of the post. In some negotiations carried on, just before the surrender, on the part of the Northwest Company and M'Dougal, that worthy personage gave full evidence that Captain Thorn was not far wrong in suspecting him to be no better than he should be. He had been for some time secretly a partner of the rival association, and shortly before the arrival of the British, took advantage of his situation as head of the

post, to barter away the property of the Company at less than one-third of its value.

Thus failed this great enterprise of Mr. Astor. At the peace, Astoria itself, by the treaty of Ghent, reverted with the adjacent country to the United States, on the principle of *status ante bellum*. In the winter of 1815, Congress passed a law prohibiting all traffic of British traders within our territories, and Mr. Astor felt anxious to seize this opportunity for the renewal of his undertaking. For good reasons, however, he could do nothing without the direct protection of the Government. This evinced much supineness in the matter; the favorable moment was suffered to pass unimproved; and, in despite of the prohibition of Congress, the British finally usurped the lucrative traffic in peltries throughout the whole of our vast territories in the Northwest. A very little aid from the sources whence he had naturally a right to expect it would have enabled Mr. Astor to direct this profitable commerce into national channels, and to render New York, what London has now long been, the great emporium for furs.

We have already spoken of the masterly manner in which Mr. Irving has executed his task. It occurs to us that we have observed one or two slight discrepancies in the narrative. There appears to be some confusion between the names of M'Lellan, M'Lennon, and M'Lennan — or do these three appellations refer to the same individual? In going up the Missouri, Mr. Hunt arrives at the Great Bend on the first of June,— the third day after which (the day on which the party is overtaken by Lisa) is said to be the third of *July*. Jones and Carson join the expedition just above the Omaha village. At page 187, vol.

1, we are told that the two men "who had joined the company at the Maha village" (meaning Omaha, we presume), deserted and were pursued, but never overtaken — at page 199, however, Carson is recognized by an Indian who is holding a parley with the party. The "Lark," too, only sailed from New York on the sixth of March, 1813, and on the tenth, we find her, much buffeted, somewhere in the near vicinity of the Sandwich Islands. These errors are of little importance in themselves, but may as well be rectified in a future edition.

II

MARGINALIA

REPRODUCTION FROM THE MANUSCRIPT
OF "MARGINALIA"

Marginalia.

By Edgar A. Poe.

Abstruseness is a quality appertaining to no subject of human consideration, per se. To him who approaches them by properly graduated steps, all topics are alike in facility of comprehension. It is merely because a stepping-stone, here and there, is heedlessly left unsupplied in our road to the Differential Calculus, that this latter is not altogether as simple a thing as a sonnet by Mr. Solomon Seesaw.

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MARGINALIA

In getting my books, I have been always solicitous of an ample margin; this not so much through any love of the thing in itself, however agreeable, as for the facility it affords me of pencilling suggested thoughts, agreements, and differences of opinion, or brief critical comments in general. Where what I have to note is too much to be included within the narrow limits of a margin, I commit it to a slip of paper, and deposit it between the leaves; taking care to secure it by an imperceptible portion of gum-tragacanth paste.

All this may be whim; it may be not only a very hackneyed, but a very idle practice; — yet I persist in it still; and it affords me pleasure; which is profit, in despite of Mr. Bentham, with Mr. Mill on his back.

This making of notes, however, is by no means the making of mere *memoranda* — a custom which has its disadvantages, beyond doubt. "*Ce que je mets sur papier*," says Bernardin de St. Pierre, "*je remets de ma mémoire, et par conséquence je l'oublie;*" — and, in fact, if you wish to forget anything on the spot, make a note that this thing is to be remembered.

But the purely marginal jottings, done with no eye to the Memorandum Book, have a distinct complex-

ion, and not only a distinct purpose, but none at all; this it is which imparts to them a value. They have a rank somewhat above the chance and desultory comments of literary chit-chat, for these latter are not unfrequently "talk for talk's sake," hurried out of the mouth; while the *marginalia* are deliberately pencilled, because the mind of the reader wishes to unburden itself of a *thought* — however flippant, however silly, however trivial — still a thought indeed, not merely a thing that might have been a thought in time, and under more favorable circumstances. In the *marginalia*, too, we talk only to ourselves; we therefore talk freshly, boldly, originally, with *abandonnement*, without conceit, much after the fashion of Jeremy Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne, and Sir William Temple, and the anatomical Burton, and that most logical analogist, Butler, and some other people of the old day, who were too full of their matter to have any room for their manner, which, being thus left out of question, was a capital manner, indeed — a model of manners, with a richly marginalic air.

The circumscription of space, too, in these pencillings, has in it something more of advantage than inconvenience. It compels us (whatever diffuseness of idea we may clandestinely entertain) into Montesquieu-ism, into Tacitus-ism (here I leave out of view the concluding portion of the "Annals") or even into Carlyle-ism — a thing which, I have been told, is not to be confounded with your ordinary affectation and bad grammar. I say "bad grammar" through sheer obstinacy, because the grammarians (who should know better) insist upon it that I should not. But then grammar is not what these grammarians will

have it; and, being merely the analysis of language, with the result of this analysis, must be good or bad just as the analyst is sage or silly — just as he is a Horne Tooke or a Cobbett.

But to our sheep. During a rainy afternoon, not long ago, being in a mood too listless for continuous study, I sought relief from ennui in dipping here and there, at random, among the volumes of my library — no very large one, certainly, but sufficiently miscellaneous; and, I flatter myself, not a little *recherché.*

Perhaps it was what the Germans call the "brain-scattering" humor of the moment; but, while the picturesqueness of the numerous pencil-scratches arrested my attention, their helter-skelter-iness of commentary amused me. I found myself, at length, forming a wish that it had been some other hand than my own which had so bedevilled the books, and fancying that, in such case, I might have derived no inconsiderable pleasure from turning them over. From this the transition-thought (as Mr. Lyell, or Mr. Murchison, or Mr. Featherstonhaugh would have it) was natural enough: — there might be something even in *my* scribblings which, for the mere sake of scribbling, would have interest for others.

The main difficulty respected the mode of transferring the notes from the volumes — the context from the text — without detriment to that exceedingly frail fabric of intelligibility in which the context was imbedded. With all appliances to boot, with the printed pages at their back, the commentaries were too often like Dodona's oracles — or those of Lycophron Tenebrosus — or the essays of the pedant's pupils, in Quintilian, which were "necessarily excellent, since

even he" (the pedant) "found it impossible to comprehend them:" — what, then, would become of it — this context — if transferred? if translated? Would it not rather be *traduit* (traduced) which is the French synonyme, or *overzezet* (turned topsy-turvy) which is the Dutch one?

I concluded, at length, to put extensive faith in the acumen and imagination of the reader: — this as a general rule. But, in some instances, where even faith would not remove mountains, there seemed no safer plan than so to remodel the note as to convey at least the ghost of a conception as to what it was all about. Where, for such conception, the text itself was absolutely necessary. I could quote it; where the title of the book commented upon was indispensable, I could name it. In short, like a novel-hero dilemma'd, I made up my mind "to be guided by circumstances," in default of more satisfactory rules of conduct.

As for the multitudinous opinion expressed in the subjoined farrago — as for my present assent to all or dissent from any portion of it — as to the possibility of my having in some instances altered my mind — or as to the impossibility of my not having altered it often — these are points upon which I say nothing, because upon these there can be nothing cleverly said. It may be as well to observe, however, that just as the goodness of your true pun is in the direct ratio of its intolerability, so is nonsense the essential sense of the Marginal Note.

Nationality in American Letters

Much has been said, of late, about the necessity of maintaining a proper nationality in American Letters; but what this nationality is, or what is to be gained by it, has never been distinctly understood. That an American should confine himself to American themes, or even prefer them, is rather a political than a literary idea — and at best is a questionable point. We would do well to bear in mind that "distance lends enchantment to the view." *Ceteris paribus*, a foreign theme is, in a strictly literary sense, to be preferred. After all, the world at large is the only legitimate stage for the authorial *histrio*.

But of the need of that nationality which defends our own literature, sustains our own men of letters, upholds our own dignity, and depends upon our own resources, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Yet here is the very point at which we are most supine. We complain of our want of an International Copyright, on the ground that this want justifies our publishers in inundating us with British opinion in British books; and yet when these very publishers, at their own obvious risk, and even obvious loss, do publish an American book, we turn up our noses at it with supreme contempt (this as a general thing) until it (the American book) has been dubbed "readable" by some illiterate Cockney critic. Is it too much to say that, with us, the opinion of Washington Irving — of Prescott — of Bryant — is a mere nullity in comparison with that of any anonymous sub-sub-editor of the "Spectator," the "Athenæum," or the London "Punch"? It is *not* saying too much to say this. It is a solemn — an absolutely awful fact.

Every publisher in the country will admit it to be a fact. There is not a more disgusting spectacle under the sun than our subserviency to British criticism. It is disgusting, first, because it is truckling, servile, pusillanimous — secondly, because of its gross irrationality. We *know* the British to bear us little but ill-will; we know that, in no case, do they utter unbiassed opinions of American books; we know that in the few instances in which our writers have been treated with common decency in England, these writers have either openly paid homage to English institutions, or have had lurking at the bottom of their hearts a secret principle at war with Democracy: — we *know* all this, and yet, day after day, submit our necks to the degrading yoke of the crudest opinion that emanates from the fatherland. Now if we *must* have nationality, let it be a nationality that will throw off this yoke.

The chief of the rhapsodists who have ridden us to death, like the Old Man of the Mountain, is the ignorant and egotistical Wilson. We use the term rhapsodists with perfect deliberation; for, Macaulay and Dilke and one or two others excepted, there is not in Great Britain a critic who can be fairly considered worthy the name. The Germans, and even the French, are infinitely superior. As regards Wilson, no man ever penned worse criticism or better rodomontade. That he is "egotistical" his works show to all men, running as they read. That he is "ignorant" let his absurd and continuous schoolboy blunders about Homer bear witness. Not long ago we ourselves pointed out a series of similar inanities in his review of Miss Barrett's poems — a series, we say, of gross blunders, arising from sheer ignorance —

and we defy him or any one to answer a single syllable of what we then advanced.

And yet this is the man whose simple *dictum* (to our shame be it spoken) has the power to make or to mar any American reputation! In the last number of "Blackwood," he has a continuation of the dull "Specimens of the British Critics," and makes occasion wantonly to insult one of the noblest of our poets, Mr. Lowell. The point of the whole attack consists in the use of slang epithets and phrases of the most ineffably vulgar description. "Squabashes" is a pet term. "Faugh!" is another. "We are Scotsmen to *the spine!*" says Sawney — as if the thing were not more than self-evident. Mr. Lowell is called "a magpie," an "ape," a "Yankee cockney," and his name is intentionally miswritten *John* Russell Lowell. Now were these indecencies perpetrated by an American critic, that critic would be sent to Coventry by the whole press of the country; but since it is Wilson who insults, we, as in duty bound, not only submit to the insult, but echo it, as an excellent jest, throughout the length and breadth of the land. *Quamdiu Catilina?* We do indeed demand the nationality of self-respect. In Letters as in Government we require a Declaration of Independence. A better thing still would be a Declaration of War — and that war should be carried forthwith "into Africa."

Magazine Literature in America

Whatever may be the merits or demerits, generally, of the magazine literature of America, there can be no question as to its extent or influence. The topic — magazine literature — is therefore an important one.

In a few years its importance will be found to have increased in geometrical ratio. The whole tendency of the age is magazine-ward. The Quarterly Reviews have *never* been popular. Not only are they too stilted (by way of keeping up a due dignity), but they make a point, with the same end in view, of discussing only topics which are *caviare* to the many, and which, for the most part, have only a conventional interest even with the few. Their issues, also, are at too long intervals; their subjects get cold before being served up. In a word, their ponderosity is quite out of keeping with the *rush* of the age. We now demand the light artillery of the intellect; we need the curt, the condensed, the pointed, the readily diffused — in place of the verbose, the detailed, the voluminous, the inaccessible. On the other hand, the lightness of the artillery should not degenerate into popgunnery — by which term we may designate the character of the greater portion of the newspaper press — their sole legitimate object being the discussion of ephemeral matters in an ephemeral manner. Whatever talent may be brought to bear upon our daily journals, and in many cases this talent is very great, still the imperative necessity of catching *currente calamo* each topic as it flits before the eye of the public must of course materially narrow the limits of their power. The bulk and the period of issue of the monthly magazines seem to be precisely adapted, if not to all the literary wants of the day, at least to the largest and most imperative as well as the most consequential portion of them.

The increase, within a few years, of the magazine literature, is by no means to be regarded as indicating

what some critics would suppose it to indicate — a downward tendency in American taste or in American letters. It is but a sign of the times — an indication of an era in which men are forced upon the curt, the condensed, the well-digested, in place of the voluminous — in a word, upon journalism in lieu of dissertation. We need now the light artillery rather than the "Peace-makers" of the intellect. I will not be sure that men at present think more profoundly than half a century ago, but beyond question they think with more rapidity, with more skill, with more tact, with more of method and less of excrescence in the thought. Besides all this, they have a vast increase in the thinking material; they have more facts, more to think about. For this reason, they are disposed to put the greatest amount of thought in the smallest compass and disperse it with the utmost attainable rapidity. Hence the journalism of the age; hence, in especial, magazines. Too many we cannot have, as a general proposition; but we demand that they have sufficient merit to render them noticeable in the beginning, and they continue in existence sufficiently long to permit us a fair estimation of their value.

International Copyright

The question of international copyright has been overloaded with words. The right of property in a literary work is disputed merely for the sake of disputation, and no man should be at the trouble of arguing the point. Those who deny it, have made up their minds to deny everything tending to further the law in contemplation. Nor is the question of expediency in any respect relevant. Expediency is only

to be discussed where no *rights* interfere. It would no doubt be very expedient in any poor man to pick the pocket of his wealthy neighbor (as the poor are the majority, the case is precisely parallel to the copyright case), but what would the rich think if expediency were permitted to overrule their right? But even the expediency is untenable, — grossly so. The immediate advantage arising to the pockets of our people, in the existing condition of things, is no doubt sufficiently plain. We get more reading for less money than if the international law existed; but the remoter disadvantages are of infinitely greater weight. In brief, they are these: First, we have injury to our national literature by repressing the efforts of our men of genius; for genius, as a general rule, is poor in worldly goods and cannot write for nothing. Our genius being thus repressed, we are written *at* only by our "gentlemen of elegant leisure," and mere gentlemen of elegant leisure have been noted, time out of mind, for the insipidity of their productions. In general, too, they are obstinately conservative, and this feeling leads them into imitation of foreign, more especially of British models. This is one main source of the imitativeness with which, as a people, we have been justly charged, although the first cause is to be found in our position as a colony. Colonies have always naturally aped the mother land. In the second place, irreparable ill is wrought by the almost exclusive dissemination among us of foreign — that is to say, of monarchical or aristocratical sentiment in foreign books; nor is this sentiment less fatal to democracy because it reaches the people themselves directly in the gilded pill of the poem or the novel. We have next to consider the impolicy of our committing, in

the national character, an open and continuous wrong on the frivolous pretext of its benefiting ourselves. The last and by far the most important consideration of all, however, is that sense of insult and injury aroused in the whole active intellect of the world, the bitter and fatal resentment excited in the universal heart of literature — a resentment which will not and which cannot make nice distinctions between the temporary perpetrators of the wrong and that democracy in general which permits its perpetration. The authorial body is the most autocratic on the face of the earth. How, then, can those institutions even hope to be safe which systematically persist in trampling it under foot?

A man of genius, if not permitted to choose his own subject, will do worse, in letters, than if he had talents none at all. And *here* how imperatively is he controlled! To be sure, he can write to suit himself — but in the same manner his publishers print. From the nature of our copyright laws, he has no individual powers. As for his free agency, it is about equal to that of the dean and chapter of the see-cathedral, in a British election of bishops — an election held by virtue of the king's writ of *congé d'élire*, specifying the person to be elected.

Men of Genius

We mere men of the world, with no principle — a very old-fashioned and cumbersome thing — should be on our guard lest, fancying him on his last legs, we insult or otherwise maltreat some poor devil of a genius at the very instant of his putting his foot on the top round of his ladder of triumph. It is a common

trick with these fellows, when on the point of attaining some long-cherished end, to sink themselves into the deepest possible abyss of seeming despair, for no other purpose than that of increasing the space of success through which they have made up their minds immediately to soar.

If any ambitious man have a fancy to revolutionize, at one effort, the universal world of human thought, human opinion, and human sentiment, the opportunity is his own — the road to immortal renown lies straight, open, and unencumbered before him. All that he has to do is to write and publish a very little book. Its title should be simple — a few plain words — "My Heart Laid Bare." But — this little book must be *true to its title.*

Now, is it not very singular that, with the rabid thirst for notoriety which distinguishes so many of mankind — so many, too, who care not a fig what is thought of them after death, there should not be found one man having sufficient hardihood to write this little book? To *write*, I say. There are ten thousand men who, if the book were once written, would laugh at the notion of being disturbed by its publication during their life, and who could not even conceive *why* they should object to its being published after their death. But to write it — *there* is the rub. No man dare write it. No man ever will dare write it. No man *could* write it, even if he dared. The paper would shrivel and blaze at every touch of the fiery pen.

All that the man of genius demands for his exaltation is moral matter in motion. It makes no difference *whither* tends the motion — whether for him or

against him — and it is absolutely of *no* consequence "*what* is the matter."

I have sometimes amused myself by endeavoring to fancy what would be the fate of an individual gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect *very* far superior to that of his race. Of course, he would be conscious of his superiority; nor could he (if otherwise constituted as man is) help manifesting his consciousness. Thus he would make himself enemies at all points. And since his opinions and speculations would widely differ from those of *all* mankind — that he would be considered a madman, is evident. How horribly painful such a condition! Hell could invent no greater torture than that of being charged with abnormal weakness on account of being abnormally strong.

In like manner, nothing can be clearer than that a *very* generous spirit — *truly* feeling what all merely profess — must inevitably find itself misconceived in every direction, its motives misinterpreted. Just as extremeness of intelligence would be thought fatuity, so excess of chivalry could not fail of being looked upon as meanness in its last degree: and so on with other virtues. This subject is a painful one indeed. That individuals *have* so soared above the plane of their race, is scarcely to be questioned; but, in looking back through history for traces of their existence, we should pass over all biographies of "the good and the great," while we search carefully the slight records of wretches who died in prison, in Bedlam, or upon the gallows.

"The more there are great excellences in a work, the less am I surprised at finding great demerits. When a book is said to have many faults, nothing is decided, and I

cannot tell, by this, whether it is excellent or execrable. It is said of another that it is without fault; if the account be just, the work *cannot* be excellent." — TRUBLET.

The "*cannot*" here is much too positive. The opinions of Trublet are wonderfully prevalent, but they are none the less demonstrably false. It is merely the *indolence* of genius which has given them currency. The truth seems to be that genius of the highest order lives in a state of perpetual vacillation between ambition and *the scorn of it*. The ambition of a great intellect is at best negative. It struggles — it labors — it creates — not because excellence is desirable, but because to be excelled where there exists a sense of the power to excel is unendurable. Indeed, I cannot help thinking that the *greatest* intellects (since these most clearly perceive the laughable absurdity of human ambition) remain contentedly "mute and inglorious." At all events, the vacillation of which I speak is the prominent feature of genius. Alternately inspired and depressed, its inequalities of mood are stamped upon its labors. This is the truth, generally — but it is a truth very different from the assertion involved in the "cannot" of Trublet Give to genius a sufficiently enduring *motive*, and the result will be harmony, proportion, beauty, perfection — all, in this case, synonymous terms. Its supposed "inevitable" irregularities shall not be found; for it is clear that the susceptibility to impressions of beauty — that susceptibility which is the most important element of genius — implies an equally exquisite sensitiveness and aversion to deformity. The motive — the *enduring* motive — has indeed, hitherto, fallen *rarely* to the lot of genius; but I could point to several compositions which, "without any fault,"

are yet "excellent," supremely so. The world, too, is on the threshold of an epoch, wherein, with the aid of a calm philosophy, such compositions shall be ordinarily the work of that genius which is *true*. One of the first and most essential steps, in overpassing this threshold, will serve to kick out of the world's way this very idea of Trublet — this untenable and paradoxical idea of the incompatibility of genius with art.

To converse well, we need the cool tact of talent — to talk well, the glowing abandon of genius Men of *very* high genius, however, talk at one time very well, at another *very* ill: — well, when they have full time, full scope, and a sympathetic listener — ill, when they fear interruption and are annoyed by the impossibility of exhausting the topic during that particular talk. The partial genius is flashy — scrappy. The true genius shudders at incompleteness, imperfection, and usually prefers silence to saying the something which is not everything that should be said. He is so filled with his theme that he is dumb, first from not knowing how to begin where there seems eternally beginning behind beginning, and secondly from perceiving his true end at so infinite a distance. Sometimes, dashing into a subject, he blunders, hesitates, stops short, sticks fast, and because he has been overwhelmed by the rush and multiplicity of his thoughts, his hearers sneer at his inability to think. Such a man finds his proper element in those "great occasions" which confound and prostrate the general intellect.

Nevertheless, by his conversation, the influence of the conversationist upon mankind in general is more

decided than that of the talker by his talk: — the latter invariably talks to best purpose with his pen. And good conversationists are more rare than respectable talkers. I know many of the latter; and of the former only five or six: — among whom I can call to mind, just now, Mr. Willis, Mr. J. T. S. Sullivan, of Philadelphia, Mr. W. M. R., of Petersburg, Va., and Mrs. S——d, formerly of New York. Most people, in conversing, force us to curse our stars that our lot was not cast among the African nation mentioned by Eudoxus — the savages who, having no mouths, never opened them, as a matter of course. And yet, if denied mouth, some persons whom I have in my eye would contrive to chatter on still — as they do now — through the nose.

Men of genius are far more abundant than is supposed. In fact, to appreciate thoroughly the work of what we call genius is to possess all the genius by which the work was produced. But the person appreciating may be utterly incompetent to reproduce the work, or anything similar, and this solely through lack of what may be termed the constructive ability — a matter quite independent of what we agree to understand in the term "genius" itself. This ability is based, to be sure, in great part, upon the faculty of analysis, enabling the artist to get full view of the machinery of his proposed effect, and thus work it and regulate it at will; but a great deal depends also upon properties strictly moral — for example, upon patience, upon concentrativeness or the power of holding the attention steadily to the one purpose, upon self-dependence and contempt for all opinion which is opinion and no more — in especial, upon

energy or industry. So vitally important is this last, that it may well be doubted if anything to which we have been accustomed to give the title of a "work of genius" was ever accomplished without it; and it is chiefly because this quality and genius are nearly incompatible, that "works of genius" are few, while mere men of genius are, as I say, abundant. The Romans, who excelled us in acuteness of observation, while falling below us in induction from facts observed, seem to have been so fully aware of the inseparable connection between industry and a "work of genius" as to have adopted the error that industry, in great measure, was genius itself. The highest compliment is intended by a Roman, when, of an epic, or anything similar, he says that it is written *industria mirabili* or *incredibili industria*.

Originality

All true men must rejoice to perceive the decline of the miserable rant and cant against originality, which was so much in vogue a few years ago among a class of microscopical critics, and which at one period threatened to degrade all American literature to the level of Flemish art.

Of puns it has been said that those most dislike who are least able to utter them; but with far more of truth may it be asserted that invectives against originality proceed only from persons at once hypocritical and commonplace. I say hypocritical — for the love of novelty is an indisputable element of the moral nature of man; and since to be original is merely to be novel, the dolt who professes a distaste for originality, in letters or elsewhere, proves in no

degree his aversion for the thing in itself, but merely that uncomfortable hatred which ever arises in the heart of an envious man for an excellence he cannot hope to attain.

Art

"The artist belongs to his work, not the work to the artist." — Novalis.

In nine cases out of ten it is pure waste of time to attempt extorting sense from a German apothegm; — or, rather, any sense and every sense may be extorted from all of them. If, in the sentence above quoted, the intention is to assert that the artist is the slave of his theme and must conform it to his thoughts, I have no faith in the idea, which appears to me that of an essentially prosaic intellect. In the hands of the true artist the theme, or "work," is but a mass of clay, of which anything (within the compass of the mass and quality of the clay) may be fashioned at will, or according to the skill of the workman. The clay is, in fact, the slave of the artist. It belongs to him. His genius, to be sure, is manifested, very distinctively, in the choice of the clay. It should be neither fine nor coarse, abstractly, but just so fine or so coarse, just so plastic or so rigid, as may best serve the purposes of the thing to be wrought, of the idea to be made out, or, more exactly, of the impression to be conveyed. There are artists, however, who fancy only the finest material, and who, consequently, produce only the finest ware. It is generally very transparent and excessively brittle.

Were I called on to define, *very* briefly, the term "Art," I should call it "the reproduction of what the

Senses perceive in Nature through the veil of the soul." The mere imitation, however accurate, of what *is* in Nature, entitles no man to the sacred name of "Artist." Denner was no artist. The grapes of Zeuxis were *in*artistic — unless in a bird's-eye view; and not even the curtain of Parrhasius could conceal his deficiency in point of genius. I have mentioned "the *veil* of the soul." Something of the kind appears indispensable in Art. We can, at any time, double the true beauty of an actual landscape by half closing our eyes as we look at it. The naked Senses sometimes see too little — but then *always* they see too much.

Versification

If need were, I should have little difficulty, perhaps, in defending a certain apparent dogmatism to which I am prone, on the topic of versification.

"What is Poetry?" notwithstanding Leigh Hunt's rigmarolic attempt at answering it, is a query that, with great care and deliberate agreement beforehand on the exact value of certain leading words, *may*, possibly, be settled to the partial satisfaction of a few analytical intellects, but which, in the existing condition of metaphysics, never *can* be settled to the satisfaction of the majority; for the question is purely metaphysical, and the whole science of metaphysics is at present a chaos, through the impossibility of fixing the meanings of the words which its very nature compels it to employ. But as regards versification, this difficulty is only partial; for although one-third of the topic may be considered metaphysical, and thus may be mooted at the fancy of this individual or of that,

still the remaining two-thirds belong, undeniably, to the mathematics. The questions ordinarily discussed with so much gravity in regard to rhythm, metre, etc., are susceptible of positive adjustment by demonstration. Their laws are merely a portion of the Median laws of form and quantity — of relation. In respect, then, to any of these ordinary questions — these sillily moot points which so often arise in common criticism — the prosodist would speak as weakly in saying "this or that proposition is *probably* so and so, or *possibly* so and so," as would the mathematician in admitting that, in his humble opinion, or if he were not greatly mistaken, any two sides of a triangle were, together, greater than the third side. I must add, however, as some palliation of the discussions referred to, and of the objections so often urged with a sneer to "particular theories of versification binding no one but their inventor" — that there is really extant no such work as a Prosody *Raisonnée*. The Prosodies of the schools are merely collections of vague *laws*, with their more vague exceptions, based upon no principles whatever, but extorted in the most speculative manner from the usages of the ancients, who had *no* laws beyond those of their ears and fingers. "And these were sufficient," it will be said, "since 'The Iliad' is melodious and harmonious beyond anything of modern times." Admit this: — but neither do we write in Greek, nor has the invention of modern times been as yet exhausted. An analysis based on the natural laws of which the bard of Scio was ignorant, would suggest multitudinous improvements to the best passages of even "The Iliad" — nor does it in any manner follow from the suppositious fact that Homer found in his ears and fingers a

satisfactory system of rules (the point which I have just denied) — nor does it follow, I say, from this, that the rules which *we* deduce from the Homeric *effects* are to supersede those immutable principles of time, quantity, etc. — the mathematics, in short, of music — which must have stood to these Homeric effects in the relation of *causes* — the *mediate* causes of which these "ears and fingers" are simply the *intermedia*.

In Colton's "American Review" for October, 1845, a gentleman, well known for his scholarship, has a forcible paper on "The Scotch School of Philosophy and Criticism." But, although the paper is "forcible," it presents the most singular admixture of error and truth — the one dovetailed into the other, after a fashion which is novel, to say the least of it. Were I to designate in a few words what the whole article demonstrated, I should say "the folly of not beginning at the beginning — of neglecting the giant Moulineau's advice to his friend Ram." Here is a passage from the essay in question: —

"The Doctors [Campbell and Johnson] both charged Pope with error and inconsistency: — error in supposing that *in English*, of metrical lines unequal in the number of syllables and pronounced in equal times, the longer suggests celerity (this being the principle of the Alexandrine); inconsistency, in that Pope himself uses the same contrivance to convey the contrary idea of slowness. But why in English? It is not and cannot be disputed that, in the hexameter verse of the Greeks and Latins — which is the model in this matter — what is distinguished as the 'dactylic line' was uniformly applied to express velocity. How was it to do so? Simply from the fact of being pronounced in an equal time with, while containing a greater number of syllables or 'bars' than, the ordinary or average meas-

ure; as, on the other hand, the spondaic line, composed of the minimum number, was, upon the same principle, used to indicate slowness. So, too, of the Alexandrine in English versification. No, says Campbell, there is a difference: the Alexandrine is not in fact, like the dactylic line, pronounced in the common time. But does this alter the principle? What is the rationale of Metre, whether the classical hexameter or the English heroic?"

I have written an essay on the "Rationale of Verse," in which the whole topic is surveyed *ab initio*, and with reference to general and immutable principles. To this essay I refer Mr. Bristed. In the mean time, without troubling myself to ascertain whether Doctors Johnson and Campbell are wrong, or whether Pope is wrong, or whether the reviewer is right or wrong, at this point or at that, let me succinctly state what is *the truth* on the topics at issue. And *first;* the same principles, in *all* cases, govern *all* verse. What is true in English is true in Greek. *Secondly;* in a series of lines, if one line contains more syllables than the law of the verse demands, and if, nevertheless, this line is pronounced in the same time, upon the whole, as the rest of the lines, then this line suggests celerity — on account of the increased rapidity of enunciation required. Thus, in the Greek hexameter, the dactylic lines — those most abounding in dactyls — serve best to convey the idea of rapid motion. The spondaic lines convey that of slowness. *Thirdly;* it is a gross mistake to suppose that the Greek dactylic line is "the model in this matter" — the matter of the English Alexandrine. The Greek dactylic line is of the same number of feet — bars — beats — pulsations — as the ordinary dactylic-spondaic lines among which it occurs. But the Alexandrine is

longer by one foot — by one pulsation — than the pentameters among which it arises. For its pronunciation it demands *more time*, and therefore, *ceteris paribus*, it would well serve to convey the impression of length, or duration, and thus, indirectly, of slowness. I say *ceteris paribus*. But, by varying conditions, we can effect a total change in the impression conveyed. When the idea of slowness is conveyed by the Alexandrine, it is not conveyed by any slower enunciation of syllables — that is to say, it is not *directly* conveyed — but indirectly, through the idea of *length* in the whole line. Now, if we wish to convey, by means of an Alexandrine, the impression of velocity, we readily do so by giving rapidity to our enunciation of the syllables composing the several feet. To effect this, however, we must have *more* syllables, or we shall get through the whole line too quickly for the intended time. To get more syllables, all we have to do, is to use, in place of iambuses, what our prosodies call anapæsts.[1] Thus in the line,

"Flies o'er the unbending corn and skims along the main,"

the syllables "the unbend" form an anapæst, and, demanding unusual rapidity of enunciation in order that we may get them in the ordinary time of an iambus, serve to suggest celerity. By the elision of "e" in "the," as is customary, the whole of the intended effect is lost; for "th'unbend" is nothing more than the usual

[1] I use the prosodial word "anapæst," merely because here I have no space to show what the reviewer will admit I have distinctly shown in the essay referred to — viz.: that the additional syllable introduced, does *not* make the foot an anapæst, or the equivalent of an anapæst, and that, if it did, it would spoil the line. On this topic, and on all topics connected with verse, there is not a prosody in existence which is not a mere jumble of the grossest error.

iambus. In a word, whenever an Alexandrine expresses celerity, we shall find it to contain one or more anapæsts,— the more anapæsts, the more decided the impression. But the tendency of the Alexandrine consisting merely of the usual iambuses is to convey slowness — although it conveys this idea feebly, on account of conveying it indirectly. It follows, from what I have said, that the common pentameter, interspersed with anapæsts, would better convey celerity than the Alexandrine interspersed with them in a similar degree ; — and it unquestionably does.

Strange — that I should here [1] find the only non-execrable *barbarian* attempts at imitation of the Greek and Roman measures !

I have never yet seen an English heroic verse on the proper model of the Greek — although there have been innumerable attempts, among which those of Coleridge are, perhaps, the most absurd, next to those of Sir Philip Sidney and Longfellow. The author of "The Vision of Rubeta" has done better, and Percival better yet; but no one has seemed to suspect that the natural preponderance of spondaic words in the Latin and Greek must, in the English, be supplied by art — that is to say, by a careful culling of the few spondaic words which the language affords — as, for example, here : —

Man is a | complex, | compound, | compost, | yet is he | God-born.

This, to all intents, is a Greek hexameter, but then its spondees are spondees, and not mere trochees. The verses of Coleridge and others are dissonant, for the

[1] Forelæsninger over det Danske Sprog, eller resonneret Dansk Grammatik, ved Jacob Buden.

simple reason that there is no equality in time between a trochee and a dactyl. When Sir Philip Sidney writes,

So to the | woods Love | runnes as | well as | rides to the | palace,

he makes an heroic verse only to the eye; for "woods Love" is the only true spondee, "runs as," "well as," and "palace," have each the first syllable long and the second short — that is to say, they are all trochees, and occupy less time than the dactyls or spondee — hence the halting. Now, all this seems to be the simplest thing in the world, and the only wonder is how men professing to be scholars should attempt to engraft a verse, of which the spondee is an element, upon a stock which repels the spondee as antagonistical.

The Dash

That punctuation is important all agree; but how few comprehend the extent of its importance! The writer who neglects punctuation, or mis-punctuates, is liable to be misunderstood — this, according to the popular idea, is the sum of the evils arising from heedlessness or ignorance. It does not seem to be known that, even where the sense is perfectly clear, a sentence may be deprived of half its force — its spirit — its point — by improper punctuations. For the want of merely a comma, it often occurs that an axiom appears a paradox, or that a sarcasm is converted into a sermonoid. There is *no* treatise on the topic; and there is no topic on which a treatise is more needed. There seems to exist a vulgar notion that the subject is one of pure conventionality, and cannot be brought within the limits of intelligible and consistent rule.

And yet, if fairly looked in the face, the whole matter is so plain that its rationale may be read as we run. If not anticipated, I shall hereafter make an attempt at a magazine paper on "The Philosophy of Point." In the mean time let me say a word or two of the dash. Every writer for the press, who has any sense of the accurate, must have been frequently mortified and vexed at the distortion of his sentences by the printer's now general substitution of a semicolon, or comma, for the dash of the manuscript. The total, or nearly total, disuse of the latter point has been brought about by the revulsion consequent upon its excessive employment about twenty years ago. The Byronic poets were *all* dash. John Neal, in his earlier novels, exaggerated its use into the grossest abuse; although his very error arose from the philosophical and self-dependent spirit which has always distinguished him, and which will even yet lead him, if I am not greatly mistaken in the man, to do something for the literature of the country which the country "will not willingly," and cannot possibly, "let die." Without entering now into the *why*, let me observe that the printer may always ascertain when the dash of the manuscript is properly and when improperly employed, by bearing in mind that this point represents *a second thought — an emendation.* In using it just above I have exemplified its use. The words "an emendation" are, speaking with reference to grammatical construction, put in *ap*position with the words "a second thought." Having written these latter words, I reflected whether it would not be possible to render their meaning more distinct by certain other words. Now, instead of erasing the phrase "a second thought," which is of *some* use — which *par-*

tially conveys the idea intended — which advances me *a step toward* my full purpose — I suffer it to remain, and merely put a dash between it and the phrase "an emendation." The dash gives the reader a choice between two, or among three or more expressions, one of which may be more forcible than another, but all of which help out the idea. It stands, in general, for these words — "*or, to make my meaning more distinct.*" This force *it has* — and this force no other point can have; since all other points have well-understood uses quite different from this. Therefore, the dash *cannot* be dispensed with. It has its phases — its variation of the force described; but the one principle — that of second thought or emendation — will be found at the bottom of all.

Inversion

"There lies a deep and sealèd well
Within yon leafy forest hid,
Whose pent and lonely waters swell
Its confines chill and drear amid."

This putting the adjective after the noun is, merely, an inexcusable Gallicism; but the putting the preposition after the noun is alien to all language, and in opposition to all its principles. Such things, in general, serve only to betray the versifier's poverty of resource; and, when an inversion of this kind occurs, we say to ourselves, "Here the poet lacked the skill to make out his line without distorting the natural or colloquial order of the words." Now and then, however, we must refer the error not to deficiency of skill, but to something far less defensible — to an idea that such things belong to the essence of poetry — that it needs them to distinguish it from prose — that we are

poetical, in a word, very much in the ratio of our unprosaicalness at these points. Even while employing the phrase "poetic license" — a phrase which has to answer for an infinity of sins — people who think in this way seem to have an indistinct conviction that the license in question *involves a necessity of being adopted.* The true artist will avail himself of no "license" whatever. The very word will disgust him; for it says — "Since you seem unable to manage without these peccadillo advantages, you must have them, I suppose; and the world, half-shutting its eyes, will do its best not to see the awkwardness which they stamp upon your poem."

Few things have greater tendency than inversion to render verse feeble and ineffective. In most cases where a line is spoken of as "forcible," the force may be referred to directness of expression. A vast majority of the passages which have become household through frequent quotation owe their popularity either to this directness, or, in general, to the scorn of "poetic license." In short, as regards verbal construction, *the more prosaic* a poetical style is, the better. Through this species of prosaicism, Cowper, with scarcely one of the higher poetical elements, came very near making his age fancy him the equal of Pope; and to the same cause are attributable three-fourths of that unusual point and force for which Moore is distinguished. It is the *prosaicism* of these two writers to which is owing their especial *quotability.*

Rhetoric

"For all the rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name the tools."

Hudibras.

What these oft-quoted lines go to show is, that a falsity in verse will travel faster and endure longer than a falsity in prose. The man who would sneer or stare at a silly proposition nakedly put, will admit that "there is a good deal in that" when "*that*" is the point of an epigram shot into the ear. The rhetorician's rules — if they *are* rules, teach him not only to name his tools, but to use his tools, the capacity of his tools, their extent, their limit; and from an examination of the nature of the tools (an examination forced on him by their constant presence), force him, also, into scrutiny and comprehension of the material on which the tools are employed, and thus, finally, suggest and give birth to new material for new tools.

Brougham

That Lord Brougham was an extraordinary man no one in his senses will deny. An intellect of unusual capacity, goaded into diseased action by passions nearly ferocious, enabled him to astonish the world, and especially the "hero-worshippers," as the author of "Sartor Resartus" has it, by the combined extent and variety of his mental triumphs. Attempting many things, it may at least be said that he egregiously failed in none. But that he pre-eminently excelled in any cannot be affirmed with truth, and might well be denied *à priori*. We have no faith in Admirable Crichtons, and this merely because we *have* implicit faith in Nature and her laws. "He that is born to be a man," says Wieland, in his Peregrinus Proteus, "neither should nor can be anything nobler, greater, or better than a man." The Broughams of the human intellect are never its Newtons or its Bayles.

Yet the contemporaneous reputation to be acquired by the former is naturally greater than any which the latter may attain. The versatility of one whom we see and hear is a more dazzling and more readily appreciable merit than his profundity; which latter is best estimated in the silence of the closet, and after the quiet lapse of years. What impression Lord Brougham has stamped upon his age, cannot be accurately determined until Time has fixed and rendered definite the lines of the medal; and fifty years hence it will be difficult, perhaps, to make out the deepest indentation of the *exergue*. Like Coleridge he should be regarded as one who might have done much, had he been satisfied with attempting but little.

"Mesmeric Revelation" and "M. Valdemar" in London

One of the happiest examples, in a small way, of the carrying-one's-self-in-a-hand-basket logic, is to be found in a London weekly paper, called "The Popular Record of Modern Science; a Journal of Philosophy and General Information." This work has a vast circulation, and is respected by eminent men. Some time in November, 1845, it copied from the "Columbian Magazine," of New York, a rather adventurous article of mine, called "Mesmeric Revelation." It had the impudence, also, to spoil the title by improving it to "The Last Conversation of a Somnambule" — a phrase that is nothing at all to the purpose, since the person who "converses" is *not* a somnambule. He is a sleep-waker — *not* a sleep-walker; but I presume that the "Record" thought it was only the difference of an *l*. What I chiefly complain of, how-

ever, is that the London editor prefaced my paper with these words: — "The following is an article communicated to the 'Columbian Magazine,' a journal of respectability and influence in the United States, by Mr. Edgar A. Poe. *It bears internal evidence of authenticity*!" There is no subject under heaven about which funnier ideas are, in general, entertained than about this subject of internal evidence. It is by "internal evidence," observe, that we decide upon the mind. But to the "Record:" — On the issue of my "Valdemar Case," this journal copies it, as a matter of course, and (also as a matter of course) improves the title, as in the previous instance. But the editorial comments may as well be called profound. Here they are: —

"The following narrative appears in a recent number of the 'American Magazine,' a respectable periodical in the United States. It comes, it will be observed, from the narrator of the 'Last Conversation of a Somnambule,' published in the 'Record' of the 29th of November. In extracting this case, the 'Morning Post,' of Monday last, takes what it considers the safe side, by remarking — 'For our own parts we do not believe it; and there are several statements made, more especially with regard to the disease of which the patient died, which at once prove the case to be either a fabrication, or the work of one little acquainted with consumption. The story, however, is wonderful, and we therefore give it.' The editor, however, does not point out the especial statements which are inconsistent with what we know of the progress of consumption, and as few scientific persons would be willing to take their pathology any more than their logic from the 'Morning Post,' his caution, it is to be feared, will not have much weight. The reason assigned by the 'Post' for publishing the account is quaint, and would apply equally to an

adventure from Baron Munchausen: — 'it is wonderful and we therefore give it.' . . . The above case is obviously one that cannot be received except on the strongest testimony, and it is equally clear that the testimony by which it is at present accompanied is not of that character. The most favorable circumstances in support of it consist in the fact that credence is understood to be given to it at New York, within a few miles of which city the affair took place, and where consequently the most ready means must be found for its authentication or disproval. The initials of the medical men and of the young medical student must be sufficient, in the immediate locality, to establish their identity, especially as M. Valdemar was well known, and had been so long ill as to render it out of the question that there should be any difficulty in ascertaining the names of the physicians by whom he had been attended. In the same way the nurses and servants, under whose cognizance the case must have come during the seven months which it occupied, are of course accessible to all sorts of inquiries. It will, therefore, appear that there must have been too many parties concerned to render prolonged deception practicable. The angry excitement and various rumors which have at length rendered a public statement necessary, are also sufficient to show that *something* extraordinary must have taken place. On the other hand there is no strong point for disbelief. The circumstances are, as the 'Post' says, 'wonderful;' but so are all circumstances that come to our knowledge for the first time — and in Mesmerism everything is new. An objection may be made that the article has rather a magazinish air; Mr. Poe having evidently written with a view to effect, and so as to excite rather than to subdue the vague appetite for the mysterious and the horrible which such a case, under any circumstances, is sure to awaken; but apart from this there is nothing to deter a philosophic mind from further inquiries regarding it. It is a matter entirely for testimony. [So it is.] Under this view we shall take

steps to procure from some of the most intelligent and influential citizens of New York all the evidence that can be had upon the subject. No steamer will leave England for America till the third of February, but within a few weeks of that time we doubt not it will be possible to lay before the readers of the 'Record' information which will enable them to come to a pretty accurate conclusion."

Yes; and no doubt they came to one accurate enough, in the end. But all this rigmarole is what people call testing a thing by "internal evidence." The "Record" insists upon the truth of the story because of certain facts — because "the initials of the young men *must* be sufficient to establish their identity" — because "the nurses *must* be accessible to all sorts of inquiries" — and because the "angry excitement and various rumors which at length rendered a public statement necessary, are sufficient to show that *something* extraordinary *must* have taken place." To be sure! The story is proved by these facts — the facts about the students, the nurses, the excitement, the credence given the tale at New York. And now all we have to do is to prove these facts. Ah! — *they* are proved *by the story*. As for the "Morning Post," it evinces more weakness in its disbelief than the "Record" in its credulity. What the former says about doubting on account of inaccuracy in the detail of the phthisical symptoms, is a mere "fetch," as the Cockneys have it, in order to make a very few little children believe that it, the "Post," is not quite so stupid as a post proverbially is. It knows nearly as much about pathology as it does about English grammar — and I really hope it will not feel called upon to blush at the compliment. I represented the symptoms of M. Valdemar as "severe," to be sure. I put an extreme

case; for it was necessary that I should leave on the reader's mind no doubt as to the certainty of death without the aid of the Mesmerist; but such symptoms *might* have appeared, the identical symptoms *have appeared*, and will be presented again and again. Had the "Post" been only half as honest as ignorant, it would have owned that it disbelieved for no reason more profound than that which influences all dunces in disbelieving — it would have owned that it doubted the thing merely because the thing was a "wonderful" thing, and had never yet been printed in a book.

The Swedenborgians inform me that they have discovered all that I said in a magazine article, entitled "Mesmeric Revelation," to be absolutely true, although at first they were very strongly inclined to doubt my veracity — a thing which, in that particular instance, I never dreamed of not doubting myself. The story is a pure fiction from beginning to end.

Plagiarism

In my reply to the letter signed "Outis" and defending Mr. Longfellow from certain charges supposed to have been made against him by myself, I took occasion to assert that "of the class of wilful plagiarists nine out of ten are authors of established reputation who plunder recondite, neglected, or forgotten books." I came to this conclusion *à priori;* but experience has confirmed me in it. Here is a plagiarism from Channing; and as it is perpetrated by an anonymous writer in a monthly magazine, the theft seems at war with my assertion — until it is seen that the magazine in question is Campbell's "New Monthly" for August,

1828. Channing, at that time, was comparatively unknown; and, besides, the plagiarism appeared in a foreign country, where there was little probability of detection. Channing, in his essay on Buonaparte, says: —

"We would observe that military talent, even of the highest order, is far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius, for it is not conversant with the highest and richest objects of thought. . . . Still the chief work of a general is to apply physical force — to remove physical obstructions — to avail himself of physical aids and advantages — to act on matter — to overcome rivers, ramparts, mountains, and human muscles; and these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest order: — and accordingly nothing is more common than to find men, eminent in this department, who are almost wholly wanting in the noblest energies of the soul — in imagination and taste, in the capacity of enjoying works of genius, in large views of human nature, in the moral sciences, in the application of analysis and generalization to the human mind and to society, and in original conceptions on the great subjects which have absorbed the most glorious understandings."

The thief in the "New Monthly" says: —

"Military talent, even of the highest *grade*, is *very* far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius, for it is *never made* conversant with the *more delicate and abstruse of mental operations*. It is used to apply physical force; to remove physical force; to remove physical obstructions; to avail itself of physical aids and advantages; and all these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest *and rarest* order.

Nothing is more common than to find men eminent in the science and practice of war *wholly* wanting in the nobler energies of the soul; in imagination, in taste, in *enlarged* views of human nature, in the moral sciences, in the application of analysis and generalization to the human mind and to society; or in original conceptions on the great subjects which have *occupied and* absorbed the most glorious *of human* understandings."

The article in the "New Monthly" is on "The State of Parties." The italics are mine.

Apparent plagiarisms frequently arise from an author's self-repetition. He finds that something he has already published has fallen dead — been overlooked — or that it is peculiarly apropos to another subject now under discussion. He therefore introduces the passage, often without allusion to his having printed it before; and sometimes he introduces it into an anonymous article. An anonymous writer is thus, now and then, unjustly accused of plagiarism — when the sin is merely that of self-repetition. In the present case, however, there has been a deliberate plagiarism of the silliest as well as meanest species. Trusting to the obscurity of his original, the plagiarist has fallen upon the idea of killing two birds with one stone — of dispensing with all disguise but that of *decoration.* Channing says "order;" the writer in the "New Monthly" says "grade." The former says that this order is "far from holding," etc.; the latter says it is "*very* far from holding." The one says that military talent is "*not* conversant," and so on; the other says "it is *never made* conversant." The one speaks of "the highest and richest objects;" the other of "the more delicate and abstruse." Channing speaks of "thought;" the thief of "mental opera-

tions." Channing mentions "intelligence of the *highest* order;" the thief will have it of "the highest *and rarest.*" Channing observes that military talent is often "*almost* wholly wanting," etc.; the thief maintains it to be "*wholly* wanting." Channing alludes to "*large* views of human nature;" the thief can be content with nothing less than "enlarged" ones. Finally, the American having been satisfied with a reference to "subjects which have absorbed the most glorious understandings," the Cockney puts him to shame at once by discoursing about "subjects which have *occupied and* absorbed the most glorious *of human* understandings" — as if one could be absorbed, without being occupied, by a subject, as if "*of*" were here anything more than two superfluous letters, and as if there were any chance of the reader's supposing that the understandings in question were the understandings of frogs, or jackasses, or Johnny Bulls.

By the way, in a case of this kind, whenever there is a question as to who is the original and who the plagiarist, the point may be determined, almost invariably, by observing which passage is amplified, or exaggerated, in tone. To disguise his stolen horse, the uneducated thief cuts off the tail; but the educated thief prefers tying on a new tail at the end of the old one, and painting them both sky blue.

One of our truest poets is Thomas Buchanan Read. His most distinctive features are, first, "tenderness," or subdued passion, and, secondly, fancy. His sin is imitativeness. *At present*, although evincing high capacity, he is but a copyist of Longfellow — that is to say, but the echo of an echo. Here is a beautiful thought which is *not* the property of Mr. Read: —

"And, where the spring-time sun had longer shone,
A violet looked up and found itself alone."

Here again: a spirit

"Slowly through the lake descended,
Till from her hidden form below
The waters took a golden glow,
As if the star which made her forehead bright
Had burst and filled the lake with light."

Lowell has some lines very similar, ending with

"As if a star had burst within his brain."

In a "Hymn for Christmas," by Mrs. Hemans, we find the following stanza: —

"Oh, lovely voices of the sky
Which hymned the Saviour's birth,
Are ye not singing still on high,
Ye that sang 'Peace on Earth'?
To us yet speak the strains
Wherewith, in times gone by,
Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
O voices of the sky!"

And at page 305 of "The Christian Keepsake and Missionary Annual for 1840" — a Philadelphia Annual — we find "A Christmas Carol," by Richard W. Dodson: — the first stanza running thus: —

"Angel voices of the sky!
Ye that hymned Messiah's birth,
Sweetly singing from on high
'Peace, Goodwill to all on earth!'
Oh, to us impart those strains!
Bid our doubts and fears to cease!
Ye that cheered the Syrian swains,
Cheer us with that song of peace!"

A rather bold and quite unnecessary plagiarism — from a book too well known to promise impunity: —

"It is now full time to begin to brush away the insects of literature, whether creeping or fluttering, which have too long crawled over and soiled the intellectual ground of this country. It is high time to shake the little sickly stems of many a puny plant, and make its fading flowerets fall." — *Monthly Register* (*New York*, 1807), ii. 243.

On the other hand —

"I have brushed away the insects of literature, whether fluttering or creeping; I have shaken the little stems of many a puny plant, and the flowerets have fallen." — *Preface to "The Pursuits of Literature."*

A long time ago — twenty-three or four years at least — Edward C. Pinckney, of Baltimore, published an exquisite poem entitled "A Health." It was profoundly admired by the critical few, but had little circulation: — this for no better reason than that the author was born *too far South*. I quote a few lines:

"Affections are as *thoughts* to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young *flowers;*
. . . . .
"To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'T is less of earth than heaven."

Now, in 1842, Mr. George Hill published "The Ruins of Athens and Other Poems," — and from one of the "Other Poems" I quote what follows: —

"And thoughts go sporting through her mind
Like children among *flowers;*
And deeds of gentle goodness are
The measures of her hours.

"In soul or face she bears no trace
Of one from Eden driven,
But like the rainbow seems, though born
Of earth, a part of heaven."

Is this plagiarism or is it *not?* — I merely ask for information.

With the aid of a lantern, I have been looking again at "Niagara and other Poems" (Lord only knows if that be the true title) — but "there 's nothing in it;" at least nothing of Mr. Lord's own — nothing which is not stolen — or (more delicately) transfused — transmitted. By the way, Newton says a great deal about "fits of easy transmission and reflection," and I have no doubt that "Niagara" was put together in one of these identical fits.

Fellows who really have no *right* — some individuals *have* — to purloin the property of their predecessors. Mere buzzards; or, in default of that, mere *pechingzies* — the species of creatures that they tell us of in the Persian Compendiums of Natural History — animals very soft and very sly, with ears of such length that, while one answers for a bed, the other is all that is necessary for a counterpane. A race of dolts — literary Cacuses, whose clumsily stolen bulls never fail of leaving behind them ample evidence of having been dragged into the thief-den by the tail.

Emerson

When I consider the true talent — the real force of Mr. Emerson, I am lost in amazement at finding in him little more than a respectful imitation of Carlyle. Is it possible that Mr. Emerson has ever seen a copy

of Seneca? Scarcely — or he would long ago have abandoned his model in utter confusion at the parallel between his own worship of the author of "Sartor Resartus" and the aping of Sallust by Aruntius, as described in the 114th Epistle. In the writer of the "History of the Punic Wars" Emerson is portrayed to the life. The parallel is close; for not only is the imitation of the same character, but the things imitated are identical. Undoubtedly it is to be said of Sallust, far more plausibly than of Carlyle, that his obscurity, his unusuality of expression, and his Laconism (which had the effect of diffuseness, since the time gained in the mere perusal of his pithinesses is trebly lost in the necessity of cogitating them out) — it may be said of Sallust more truly than of Carlyle, that these qualities bore the impress of his genius and were but a portion of his unaffected thought. If there is any difference between Aruntius and Emerson, this difference is clearly in favor of the former, who was in some measure excusable, on the ground that he was as great a fool as the latter *is not.*

Coxe's "Saul"

"The Reverend Arthur Coxe's 'Saul, a Mystery,' having been condemned in no measured terms by Poe, of the 'Broadway Journal,' and Green of the 'Emporium,' a writer in the Hartford 'Columbian' retorts as follows:

'An entertaining history,
Entitled "Saul, a Mystery,"
Has recently been published by the Reverend Arthur Coxe.
The poem is dramatic,
And the wit of it is Attic,
And its teachings are emphatic of the doctrines orthodox.

'But Mr. Poe, the poet,
Declares he cannot go it—
That the book is very stupid, or something of that sort.
And Green, of the Empori-
Um, tells a kindred story,
And swears like any Tory that it is n't worth a groat.

'But maugre all the croaking
Of the Raven and the joking
Of the verdant little fellow of the used-to-be Review,
The People, in derision
Of their impudent decision,
Have declared, without division, that the "Mystery" will do.'"

The *truth*, of course, rather injures an epigram than otherwise; and nobody will think the worse of the one above, when I say that, at the date of its first appearance, I had expressed *no opinion whatever* of the poem to which it refers. "Give a dog a bad name," etc. Whenever a book is abused, people take it for granted that it is *I* who have been abusing it.

Latterly I *have* read "Saul," and agree with the epigrammatist, that it "will do"—whoever attempts to wade through it. It will do, also, for trunk-paper. The author is right in calling it "A Mystery;" for a most unfathomable mystery it is. When I got to the end of it, I found it more mysterious than ever—and it was really a mystery how I ever did get to the end—which I half fancied that somebody had cut off, in a fit of ill-will to the critics. I have heard not a syllable about the "Mystery," of late days. "The People" seem to have forgotten it; and Mr. Coxe's friends should advertise it under the head of "Mysterious Disappearance"—that is to say, the disappearance of a Mystery.

Art

To see distinctly the machinery — the wheels and pinions — of any work of art is, unquestionably, of itself, a pleasure, but one which we are able to enjoy only just in proportion as we do *not* enjoy the legitimate effect designed by the artist; and, in fact, it too often happens that to reflect analytically upon art is to reflect after the fashion of the mirrors in the temple of Smyrna, which represent the fairest images as deformed.

"Ellen Middleton"

A remarkable work, and one which I find much difficulty in admitting to be the composition of a woman. Not that many good and glorious things have not been the composition of women — but because, here, the severe precision of style, the *thoroughness*, and the luminousness, are points never observable, in even the most admirable of their writings. Who is Lady Georgiana Fullerton? Who is that Countess of Dacre, who edited "Ellen Wareham," — the most passionate of fictions — approached only in some particulars of passion by this? The great defect of "Ellen Middleton" lies in the disgusting sternness, captiousness, and bullet-headedness of her husband. We cannot sympathize with her love for him. And the intense selfishness of the rejected lover precludes that compassion which is designed. Alice is a *creation* of true genius. The imagination, throughout, is of a lofty order, and the snatches of original verse would do honor to any poet living. But the chief merit, after all, is that of the *style* — about which it is difficult to say too much in the way of praise,

although it has, now and then, an odd Gallicism — such as "she lost her head," meaning she grew crazy. There is much, in the whole manner of this book, which puts me in mind of "Caleb Williams."

Fouqué

This book ["Thiodolf, the Icelander, and Aslauga's Knight"] could never have been popular out of Germany. It is too simple, too direct, too obvious, too *bold*, not sufficiently complex, to be relished by any people who have *thoroughly* passed the first (or impulsive) epoch of literary civilization. The Germans have not yet passed this first epoch. It must be remembered that *during the whole of the middle ages they lived in utter ignorance of the art of writing.* From so total a darkness, of so late a date, they could not, as a nation, have as yet fully emerged into the second or critical epoch. Individual Germans have been critical in the best sense; but the masses are unleavened. Literary Germany thus presents the singular spectacle of the impulsive spirit surrounded by the critical, and, of course, in some measure influenced thereby. England, for example, has advanced far, and France much farther, into the critical epoch; and their effect on the German mind is seen in the wildly anomalous condition of the German literature at large. That this latter will be improved by age, however, should never be maintained. As the impulsive spirit subsides, and the critical uprises, there will appear the polished insipidity of the later England, or that ultimate *throe* of taste which has found its best exemplification in Sue. At present the German literature resembles no other on the face of the

earth; for it is the result of certain conditions which, before this individual instance of their fulfilment, have never been fulfilled. And this anomalous state to which I refer is the source of our anomalous criticism upon what that state produces — is the source of the grossly conflicting opinions about German letters. For my own part, I admit the German vigor, the German directness, boldness, imagination, and some other qualities of impulse, just as I am willing to admit and admire these qualities in the first (or impulsive) epochs of British and French letters. At the German criticism, however, I cannot refrain from laughing all the more heartily, all the more seriously I hear it praised. Not that, in detail, it affects me as an absurdity — but in the adaptation of its details. It abounds in brilliant bubbles of *suggestion*, but these rise and sink and jostle each other, until the whole vortex of thought in which they originate is one indistinguishable chaos of froth. The German criticism is unsettled, and can only be settled by time. At present it suggests without demonstrating, or convincing, or effecting any definite purpose under the sun. We read it, rub our foreheads, and ask "What then?" I am not ashamed to say that I prefer even Voltaire to Goethe, and hold Macaulay to possess more of the true critical spirit than Augustus William and Frederick Schlegel combined. "Thiodolf" is called by Fouqué his "most *successful* work." He would not have spoken thus had he considered it his best. It is admirable of its kind, but its kind can never be appreciated by Americans. It will affect them much as would a grasp of the hand from a man of ice. Even the exquisite "Undine" is too chilly for our people, and, generally, for our epoch. We have

less imagination and warmer sympathies than the age which preceded us. It would have done Fouqué more ready and fuller justice than ours. Has any one remarked the striking similarity in tone between "Undine" and the "Libussa" of Musæus?

How radically has "Undine" been misunderstood! Beneath its obvious meaning there runs an undercurrent, simple, quite intelligible, artistically managed, and richly philosophical.

From internal evidence afforded by the book itself, I gather that the author suffered from the ills of a mal-arranged marriage — the bitter reflections thus engendered, inducing the fable.

In the contrast between the artless, thoughtless, and careless character of Undine before possessing a soul, and her serious, enwrapt, and anxious yet happy condition after possessing it, — a condition which, with all its multiform disquietudes, she still feels to be preferable to her original state, — Fouqué has beautifully painted the difference between the heart unused to *love*, and the heart which has received its inspiration.

The jealousies which follow the marriage, arising from the conduct of Bertalda, are but the natural troubles of love; but the persecutions of Kuhleborn and the other water-spirits who take umbrage at Huldbrand's treatment of his wife, are meant to picture certain difficulties from the interference of relations in conjugal matters — difficulties which the author has himself experienced. The warning of Undine to Huldbrand — "Reproach me not upon the waters, or we part forever" — is intended to embody the truth that quarrels between man and wife are sel-

dom or never irremediable unless when taking place in the presence of third parties. The second wedding of the knight with his gradual forgetfulness of Undine, and Undine's intense grief beneath the waters, — are dwelt upon so pathetically, so passionately, that there can be no doubt of the author's personal opinions on the subject of second marriages — no doubt of his deep personal interest in the question. How thrillingly are these few and simple words made to convey his belief that the mere death of a beloved wife does not imply a separation so final or so complete as to justify an union with another!

"The fisherman had loved Undine with exceeding tenderness, and it was a doubtful conclusion to his mind that the mere disappearance of his beloved child could be properly viewed as her death."

This is where the old man is endeavoring to dissuade the knight from wedding Bertalda.

I cannot say whether the novelty of the conception of "Undine," or the loftiness and purity of its ideality, or the intensity of its pathos, or the rigor of its simplicity, or the high artistical ability with which all are combined into a well-kept, well-*motivirt* whole of absolute unity of effect — is the particular chiefly to be admired.

How delicate and graceful are the transitions from subject to subject! — a point severely testing the authorial power — as, when, for the purposes of the story, it becomes necessary that the knight, with Undine and Bertalda, shall proceed down the Danube. An ordinary novelist would have here tormented both himself and his readers, in his search for a sufficient motive for the voyage. But, in a fable such as

"Undine," how all-sufficient — how well in keeping — appears the simple motive assigned! —

"In this grateful union of friendship and affection, winter came and passed away; and spring, with its foliage of tender green, and its heaven of softest blue, succeeded to gladden the hearts of the three inmates of the castle. *What wonder, then, that its storks and swallows inspired them also with a disposition to travel?*"

VOLNEY

"That evil predominates over good, becomes evident, when we consider that there can be found no aged person who would be willing to re-live the life he has already lived." — VOLNEY.

The idea here is not distinctly made out; for, unless through the context, we cannot be sure whether the author means merely this — that every aged person fancies he might, in a different course of life, have been happier than in the one actually lived, and, for this reason, would not be willing to live *his* life over again, *but some other life;* or whether the sentiment intended is this — that if, upon the grave's brink, the choice between the expected death and the re-living the old life were offered any aged person, that person would prefer to die. The first proposition is, perhaps, true; but the last (which is the one designed) is not only doubtful, in point of mere fact, but is of no effect, even if granted to be true, in sustaining the original proposition — that evil predominates over good. It is assumed that the aged person will not re-live his life, because he *knows* that its evil predominated over its good. The source of error lies in the word "knows" — in the assumption that we can ever be,

really, in possession of the whole knowledge to which allusion is cloudily made. But there is a *seeming* — a fictitious knowledge; and this very seeming knowledge it is, of what the life has been, which incapacitates the aged person from deciding the question on its merits. He blindly deduces a notion of the happiness of the original real life — a notion of its preponderating evil or good — from a consideration of the secondary or supposititious one. In his estimate he merely strikes a balance between *events*, and leaves quite out of the account that elastic *Hope* which is the Eos of all. Man's real life is happy, chiefly because he is ever expecting that it soon will be so. In regarding the supposititious life, however, we paint to ourselves chill certainties for warm expectations, and grievances quadrupled in being foreseen. But because we cannot avoid doing this, strain our imaginative faculties as we will — because it is so very difficult, so nearly impossible a task, to fancy the known unknown, the done unaccomplished, and because (through our inability to fancy all this) we prefer death to a secondary life — does it, in any manner, follow that the evil of the properly-considered real existence *does* predominate over the good?

In order that a just estimate be made by Mr. Volney's "aged person," and from this estimate a judicious choice: — in order, again, that from this estimate and choice, we deduce any clear comparison of good with evil in human existence, it will be necessary that we obtain the opinion, or "choice," upon this point, from an aged person, who shall be in condition to appreciate, with precision, the hopes he is naturally led to leave out of question, but which reason tells us he would as strongly experience as ever, in the abso-

lute re-living of the life. On the other hand, too, he must be in condition to dismiss from the estimate the fears which he actually feels, and which show him bodily the ills that are to happen, but which fears, again, reason assures us he would *not*, in the absolute secondary life, encounter. Now what mortal was ever in condition to make these allowances? — to perform impossibilities in giving these considerations their due weight? What mortal, then, was ever in condition to make a well-grounded choice? How, from an ill-grounded one, are we to make deductions which shall guide us aright? How out of error shall we fabricate truth?

The Last Page

I have at length attained the last page, which is a thing to thank God for; and all this may be logic, but I am sure it is nothing more. Until I get the means of refutation, however, I must be content to say, with the Jesuits, Le Sueur and Jacquier, that "I acknowledge myself obedient to the decrees of the Pope against the motion of the earth."

"Rhododaphne"

"Rhododaphne" (who wrote it?) is brim-full of music: — e. g: —

> "By living streams, in sylvan shades,
> Where wind and wave symphonious make
> Rich melody, the youths and maids
> No more with choral music wake
> Lone Echo from her tangled brake."

Sue's "Mysteries of Paris"

I have just finished Sue's "Mysteries of Paris" — a work of unquestionable power — a museum of novel and ingenious incident — a paradox of childish folly and consummate skill. It has this point in common with all the "convulsive" fictions — that the incidents are *consequential* from the premises, while the premises themselves are laughably incredible. Admitting, for instance, the possibility of such a man as Rodolphe, and of such a state of society as would tolerate his perpetual interference, we have no difficulty in agreeing to admit the possibility of his accomplishing all that is accomplished. Another point which distinguishes the Sue school, is the total want of the *ars celare artem.* In effect the writer is always saying to the reader, "Now — in one moment — you shall see what you shall see. I am about to produce on you a remarkable impression. Prepare to have your imagination, or your pity, greatly excited." The wires are not only not concealed, but displayed as things to be admired, equally with the puppets they set in motion. The result is, that in perusing, for example, a pathetic chapter in the "Mysteries of Paris" we say to ourselves, without shedding a tear — "Now, here is something which will be sure to move every reader to tears." The philosophical motives attributed to Sue are absurd in the extreme. His first, and in fact his sole object, is to make an exciting, and therefore salable book. The cant (implied or direct) about the amelioration of society, etc., is but a very usual trick among authors, whereby they hope to add such a tone of dignity or utilitarianism to their pages as shall gild the pill of their licentious-

ness. The ruse is even more generally employed by way of engrafting a meaning upon the otherwise unintelligible. In the latter case, however, this ruse is an after-thought, manifested in the shape of a moral, either appended (as in Æsop) or dovetailed into the body of the work, piece by piece, with great care, but never without leaving evidence of its after-insertion.

The translation (by C. H. Town) is very imperfect, and, by a too literal rendering of idioms, contrives to destroy the whole *tone* of the original. Or, perhaps, I should say a too literal rendering of *local peculiarities of phrase.* There is one point (never yet, I believe, noticed) which, obviously, should be considered in translation. We should so render the original that *the version should impress the people for whom it is intended just as the original impresses the people for whom it* (*the original*) *is intended.* Now, if we rigorously translate mere local idiosyncrasies of phrase (to say nothing of idioms) we inevitably distort the author's designed impression. We are sure to produce a whimsical, at least, if not always a ludicrous, effect — for novelties, in a case of this kind, are incongruities, oddities. A distinction, of course, should be observed between those peculiarities of phrase which appertain to the nation and those which belong to the author himself, for these latter will have a similar effect upon *all* nations, and should be literally translated. It is merely the general inattention to the principle here proposed, which has given rise to so much international depreciation, if not positive contempt, as regards literature. The English reviews, for example, have abundant allusions to what they call the "frivolousness" of French letters — an idea

chiefly derived from the impression made by the French manner merely; this manner, again, having in it nothing *essentially* frivolous, but affecting all foreigners as such (the English especially) through that oddity of which I have already assigned the origin. The French return the compliment, complaining of the British *gaucherie* in style. The phraseology of every nation has a taint of *drollery* about it in the ears of every other nation speaking a different tongue. Now, to convey the true spirit of an author, this taint should be corrected in translation. We should pride ourselves less upon literality and more upon dexterity at paraphrase. Is it not clear that, by such dexterity, *a translation may be made to convey to a foreigner a juster conception of an original than could the original itself?*

The distinction I have made between mere idioms (which, *of course*, should never be literally rendered) and "local idiosyncrasies of *phrase*," may be exemplified by a passage at page 291 of Mr. Town's translation: —

"Never mind! Go in there! You will take the cloak of Calebasse. You will wrap yourself in it," etc., etc.

These are the words of a lover to his mistress, and are meant kindly, although imperatively. They embody a local peculiarity — a *French* peculiarity of phrase, and (to French ears) convey nothing dictatorial. To our own, nevertheless, they sound like the command of a military officer to his subordinate, and thus produce an effect quite different from that intended. The translation, in such case, should be a bold paraphrase. For example: — "I must insist upon your wrapping yourself in the cloak of Calebasse."

Mr. Town's version of "The Mysteries of Paris," however, is not objectionable on the score of excessive literality alone, but abounds in misapprehensions of the author's meaning. One of the strangest errors occurs at page 368, where we read: —

"'From a wicked, brutal savage and riotous rascal, he has made me a kind of honest man by saying only two words to me; but these words, "*voyez-vous*," were like magic.'"

Here "*voyez-vous*" are made to be the two magical words spoken; but the translation should run — "these words, do you see? were like magic." The actual words described as producing the magical effect are "heart" and "honor."

Of similar character is a curious mistake at page 245.

"'He is a *gueux fini* and an attack will not save him,' added Nicholas. 'A — yes,' said the widow."

Many readers of Mr. Town's translation have no doubt been puzzled to perceive the force or relevancy of the widow's "A — yes" in this case. I have not the original before me, but take it for granted that it runs thus, or nearly so: — "*Il est un gueux fini et un assaut ne l'intimidera pas.*" "*Un — oui!*" *dit la veuve.*

It must be observed that, in vivacious French colloquy, the *oui* seldom implies assent to the letter, but generally to the spirit, of a proposition. Thus a Frenchman usually says "yes" where an Englishman would say "no." The latter's reply, for example, to the sentence "An attack will not intimidate him," would be "No" — that is to say, "I grant you that it would not." The Frenchman, however, answers

"Yes" — meaning, "I agree with what you say — it would not." Both replies, of course, reaching the same point, although by opposite routes. With this understanding, it will be seen that the true version of the widow's "*Un — oui!*" should be, "*One* attack, I grant you, might not," and that this *is* the version becomes apparent when we read the words immediately following — "but *every* day — *every* day it is hell!"

An instance of another class of even more reprehensible blunders, is to be found on page 297, where Bras-Rouge is made to say to a police officer — "No matter; it is not of that I complain; every trade has its *disagreements*." Here, no doubt, the French is *désagrémens* — inconveniences — disadvantages — unpleasantnesses. *Désagrémens* conveys disagreements not even so nearly as, in Latin, *religio* implies religion.

I was not a little surprised, in turning over these pages, to come upon the admirable, thrice admirable story called *Gringalet et Coupe en Deux*, which is related by Pique-Vinaigre to his companions in *La Force*. Rarely have I read anything of which the exquisite *skill* so delighted me. For my soul I could not suggest a fault in it — except, perhaps, that the intention of telling a *very* pathetic story is a little too transparent.

But I say that I was *surprised* in coming upon this story — and I *was* so, because one of its points has been suggested to M. Sue by a tale of my own. *Coupe en Deux* has an ape remarkable for its size, strength, ferocity, and propensity to imitation. Wishing to commit a murder so cunningly that discovery would be impossible, the master of this animal teaches

it to imitate the functions of a barber, and incites it to cut the throat of a child, under the idea that, when the murder is discovered, it will be considered the uninstigated deed of the ape.

On first seeing this, I felt apprehensive that some of my friends would accuse me of plagiarizing from it my "Murders in the Rue Morgue." But I soon called to mind that this latter was first published in "Graham's Magazine" for April, 1841. Some years ago, the Paris *Charivari* copied my story with complimentary comments; objecting, however, to the Rue Morgue on the ground that no such street (to the *Charivari's* knowledge) existed in Paris. I do not wish, of course, to look upon M. Sue's adaptation of my property in any other light than that of a compliment. The similarity *may* have been entirely accidental.

Antigone

About the "Antigone," as about all the ancient plays, there seems to me a certain *baldness*, the result of inexperience in art, but which pedantry would force us to believe the result of a studied and supremely artistic simplicity. Simplicity, indeed, is a very important feature in all true art — but *not* the simplicity which we see in the Greek drama. That of the Greek sculpture is everything that can be desired, because here the art in itself is simplicity in itself and in its elements. The Greek sculptor chiselled his forms from what he saw before him every day, in a beauty nearer to perfection than any work of any Cleomenes in the world. But in the drama, the direct, straightforward, *un-German* Greek had no Nature so immediately presented from which to make

copy. He did what he could — but I do not hesitate to say that that was exceedingly little worth. The profound sense of one or two tragic, or rather, melodramatic elements (such as the idea of inexorable Destiny) — this sense gleaming at intervals from out the darkness of the ancient stage, serves, in the very imperfection of its development, to show, not the dramatic ability, but the dramatic *in*ability of the ancients. In a word, the simple arts spring into perfection at their origin; the complex as inevitably demand the long and painfully progressive experience of ages. To the Greeks, beyond doubt, their drama *seemed* perfection; it fully answered, to them, the dramatic end, excitement, and this fact is urged as proof of their drama's perfection in itself. It need only be said, in reply, that their art and their sense of art were, necessarily, on a level.

John Neal

I hardly know how to account for the repeated failures of John Neal as regards the *construction* of his works. His art is great and of a high character — but it is massive and undetailed. He seems to be either deficient in a sense of completeness, or unstable in temperament; so that he becomes wearied with his work before getting it done. He always begins well, vigorously, startlingly, proceeds by fits, much at random, now prosing, now gossiping, now running away with his subject, now exciting vivid interest; but his conclusions are sure to be hurried and indistinct; so that the reader, perceiving a falling-off where he expects a climax, is pained, and, closing the book with dissatisfaction, is in no mood to give the author credit for the vivid sensations which have been aroused *dur-*

ing the progress of perusal. Of all literary foibles the most fatal, perhaps, is that of defective climax. Nevertheless, I should be inclined to rank John Neal first, or at all events second, among our men of indisputable *genius*. Is it, or is it not a fact, that the air of a Democracy agrees better with mere Talent than with Genius?

Malibran

Upon her was lavished the enthusiastic applause of the most correct taste, and of the deepest sensibility. Human triumph, in all that is most exciting and delicious, never went beyond that which she experienced — or never but in the case of Taglioni. For what are the extorted adulations that fall to the lot of the conqueror? — what even are the extensive honors of the popular author — his far-reaching fame — his high influence — or the most devout public appreciation of his works — to that rapturous approbation of the personal woman — that spontaneous, instant, present, and palpable applause — those irrepressible acclamations — those eloquent sighs and tears which the idolized Malibran at once heard, and saw, and deeply felt that she deserved? Her brief career was one gorgeous dream — for even the many sad intervals of her grief were but dust in the balance of her glory. In this book[1] I read much about the causes which curtailed her existence; and there seems to hang around them, as here given, an indistinctness which the fair memorialist tries in vain to illumine. She seems never to approach the full truth. She seems never to reflect that the speedy decease was but a condition of

[1] "Memoirs and Letters of Madame Malibran," by the Countess of Merlin.

the rapturous life. No thinking person, hearing Malibran sing, could have doubted that she would die in the spring of her days. She crowded ages into hours. She left the world at twenty-five, having existed her thousands of years.

Southey's "Doctor"

"The Doctor" has excited great attention in America as well as in England, and has given rise to every variety of conjecture and opinion, not only concerning the author's individuality, but in relation to the meaning, purpose, and character of the book itself. It is now said to be the work of one author — now of two, three, four, five — as far even as nine or ten. These writers are sometimes thought to have composed "The Doctor" conjointly — sometimes to have written each a portion. These individual portions have even been pointed out by the supremely acute, and the names of their respective fathers assigned. Supposed discrepancies of taste and manner, together with the prodigal introduction of mottoes, and other scraps of erudition (apparently beyond the compass of a single individual's reading) have given rise to this idea of a multiplicity of writers — among whom are mentioned in turn all the most witty, all the most eccentric, and especially all the most learned of Great Britain. Again, in regard to the nature of the book. It has been called an imitation of Sterne — an august and most profound exemplification, under the garb of eccentricity, of some all-important moral law — a true, under guise of a fictitious, biography — a simple *jeu d'esprit* — a mad farrago by a Bedlamite — and a great multiplicity of other equally fine names

and hard. Undoubtedly, the best method of arriving at a decision in relation to a work of this nature is to read it through with attention, and thus see what can be made of it. We have done so, and can make nothing of it, and are therefore clearly of opinion that "The Doctor" is precisely — nothing. We mean to say that it is nothing better than *a hoax*.

That any serious truth is meant to be inculcated by a tissue of bizarre and disjointed rhapsodies, whose general meaning no person can fathom, is a notion altogether untenable, unless we suppose the author a madman. But there are none of the proper evidences of madness in the book, while of mere banter there are instances innumerable. One half, at least, of the entire publication is taken up with palpable quizzes, reasonings in a circle, sentences like the nonsense verses of Du Bartas evidently framed to mean nothing while wearing an air of profound thought, and grotesque speculations in regard to the probable excitement to be created by the book.

It appears to have been written with a sole view (or nearly with the sole view) of exciting inquiry and comment. That this object should be fully accomplished cannot be thought very wonderful, when we consider the excessive trouble taken to accomplish it, by vivid and powerful intellect. That "The Doctor" is the offspring of such intellect is proved sufficiently by many passages of the book, where the writer appears to have been led off from his main design. That it is written by more than one man should not be deduced either from the apparent immensity of its erudition, or from discrepancies of style. That man is a desperate mannerist who cannot vary his style *ad infinitum*; and although the book *may* have been

written by a number of learned *bibliophagi*, still there is, we think, nothing to be found in the book itself at variance with the possibility of its being written by any one individual of even mediocre reading. Erudition is only certainly known in its *total* results. The mere grouping together of mottoes from the greatest multiplicity of the rarest works, or even the apparently natural inweaving into any composition of the sentiments and manner of these works, are attainments within the reach of any well-informed, ingenious, and industrious man having access to the great libraries of London. Moreover, while a single individual possessing these requisites and opportunities might through a rabid desire of *creating a sensation* have written with some trouble "The Doctor," it is by no means easy to imagine that a plurality of sensible persons could be found willing to embark in such absurdity from a similar, or indeed from any imaginable inducement.

The present edition of the Harpers' consists of two volumes in one. Volume one commences with a "Prelude of Mottoes" occupying two pages. Then follows a "Postscript"—then a "Table of Contents to the First Volume," occupying eighteen pages. Volume two has a similar "Prelude of Mottoes" and "Table of Contents." The whole is subdivided into "Chapters Ante-Initial," "Initial," and "Post-Initial," with "Inter-chapters." The pages have now and then a typographical *queerity*—a monogram, a scrap of grotesque music, old English, etc. Some characters of this latter kind are printed with colored ink in the British edition, which is gotten up with great care. All these oddities are in the manner of Sterne, and some of them are exceedingly well conceived. The work professes to be a Life of one Doctor Daniel Dove

and his horse Nobs — but we should put no very great faith in this biography. On the back of the book is a monogram, which appears again once or twice in the text, and whose solution is a fertile source of trouble with all readers. This monogram is a triangular pyramid; and as, in geometry, the solidity of every polyhedral body may be computed by dividing the body into pyramids, the pyramid is thus considered as the base or essence of every polyhedron. The author then, after his own fashion, may mean to imply that his book is the basis of all solidity or wisdom — or perhaps, since the polyhedron is not only a solid, but a solid terminated by *plane faces*, that "The Doctor" is the very essence of all that spurious wisdom which will terminate in just nothing at all — in a hoax, and a consequent multiplicity of *blank visages*. The wit and humor of "The Doctor" have seldom been equalled. We cannot think Southey wrote it, but have no idea who did.

Simms

"It was a pile of the oyster which yielded the precious pearls of the South, and the artist had judiciously painted some with their lips parted, and showing, within, the large precious fruit in the attainment of which Spanish cupidity had already proved itself capable of every peril, as well as every crime. At once true and poetical, no comment could have been more severe," etc. — Mr. Simms's *Damsel of Darien*.

Body of Bacchus! — only think of poetical beauty in the countenance of a gaping oyster!

"And how natural, in an age so fanciful, to believe that the stars and starry groups beheld in the new world for

the first time by the native of the old were especially assigned for its government and protection."

Now, if by the old world be meant the East, and by the new world the West, I am at a loss to know what *are* the stars seen in the one which cannot be equally seen in the other. Mr. Simms has abundant faults — or had; among which inaccurate English, a proneness to revolting images, and pet phrases, are the most noticeable. Nevertheless, leaving out of the question Brockden Brown and Hawthorne (who are each a *genus*), he is immeasurably the best writer of fiction in America. He has more vigor, more imagination, more movement, and more general capacity than all our novelists (save Cooper) combined.

A ballad entitled "Indian Serenade," and put into the mouth of the hero, Vasco Nunez, is, perhaps, the most really meritorious portion of Mr. Simms's "Damsel of Darien." This stanza is full of music:

> "And their wild and mellow voices
> Still to hear along the deep
> Every brooding star rejoices,
> While the billow, on its pillow,
> Lulled to silence seems to sleep."

And also this: —

> "'T is the wail for life they waken
> By Samana's yielding shore —
> With the tempest it is shaken;
> The wild ocean is in motion,
> And the song is heard no more."

Lowell

"Here is a man who is a scholar and an artist, who knows precisely how every effect has been produced by

every great writer, and who is resolved to reproduce them. But the heart passes by his pitfalls and traps, and carefully-planned springes, to be taken captive by some simple fellow who expected the event as little as did his prisoner."

Perhaps I err in quoting these words as the author's own — they are in the mouth of one of his interlocutors — but whoever claims them, they are poetical and no more. The error is exactly that common one of separating practice from the theory which includes it. In all cases, if the practice fail, it is because the theory is imperfect. If Mr. Lowell's heart be not caught in the pitfall or trap, then the pitfall is ill-concealed and the trap is not properly baited or set. One who has *some artistical ability* may know how to do a thing, and even show how to do it, and yet fail in doing it after all; but the artist and the man of some artistic ability must not be confounded. He only is the former who can carry his most shadowy precepts into successful application. To say that a critic could not have written the work which he criticises, is to put forth a contradiction in terms.

Bulwer

"He (Bulwer) is the most accomplished writer of the most accomplished era of English Letters; practising all styles and classes of composition, and eminent in all — novelist, dramatist, poet, historian, moral philosopher, essayist, critic, political pamphleteer; — in each superior to all others, and only rivalled in each by himself." — Ward, author of *Tremaine*.

The "only rivalled in each by himself," here, puts me in mind of

"None but himself can be his parallel."

But surely Mr. Ward (who, although he did write "De Vere," is by no means a fool) could never have put to paper, in his sober senses, anything so absurd as the paragraph quoted above, without stopping at every third word to hold his sides, or thrust his pocket-handkerchief into his mouth. If the serious intention be insisted upon, however, I have to remark that the opinion is the *mere* opinion of a writer remarkable for no other good trait than his facility at putting his readers to sleep according to rules Addisonian, and with the least possible loss of labor and time. But as the *mere* opinion of even a Jeffrey or a Macaulay, I have an inalienable right to meet it with another.

As a novelist, then, Bulwer is far more than respectable; although *generally* inferior to Scott, Godwin, D'Israeli, Miss Burney, Sue, Dumas, Dickens, the author of "Ellen Wareham," and the author of "Jane Eyre," and several others. From the list of foreign novels I could select a hundred which he could neither have written nor conceived. As a dramatist, he deserves more credit, although he receives less. His "Richelieu," "Money," and "Lady of Lyons," have done much in the way of opening the public eyes to the true value of what is superciliously termed "stage effect" in the hands of one able to manage it. But if commendable at this point, his dramas fail egregiously in points more important; so that, upon the whole, he can be said to have written a good play, only when we think of him in connection with the still more contemptible "old-dramatist" imitators who are his contemporaries and friends. As historian, he is sufficiently dignified, sufficiently ornate, and more than sufficiently self-sufficient. His "Athens" would have

received an Etonian prize, and has all the happy air of an Etonian prize-essay re-vamped. His political pamphlets are very good as political pamphlets and very disreputable as anything else. His essays leave no doubt upon anybody's mind that, with the writer, they have been essays indeed. His criticism is really beneath contempt. His moral philosophy is the most ridiculous of all the moral philosophies that ever have been imagined upon earth.

"The men of sense," says Helvetius, "those idols of the unthinking, are very far inferior to the men of passions. It is the strong passions which, rescuing us from sloth, can alone impart to us that continuous and earnest attention necessary to great intellectual efforts."

When the Swiss philosopher here speaks of "inferiority," he refers to inferiority in worldly success: — by "men of sense" he intends indolent men of genius. And Bulwer is, emphatically, one of the "men of passions" contemplated in the apothegm. His passions, with opportunities, have made him what he is. Urged by a rabid ambition to do much, in doing nothing he would merely have proved himself an idiot. Something he has done. In aiming at Crichton, he has hit the target an inch or two above Harrison Ainsworth. Not to such intellects belong the honors of universality. His works bear about them the unmistakable indications of mere talent — talent, I grant, of an unusual order, and nurtured to its extreme of development with a very tender and elaborate care. Nevertheless, it is talent still. Genius it is not.

And the proof is, that while we often fancy ourselves about to be enkindled beneath its influence, fairly enkindled we never are. That Bulwer is no *poet*, follows as a corollary from what has been already

said: — for to speak of a poet without genius, is merely to put forth a flat contradiction in terms.

The merely mechanical style of "Athens" is far better than that of any of Bulwer's previous books. In general he is atrociously involute — this is his main defect. He wraps one sentence in another *ad infinitum* — very much in the fashion of those "nests of boxes" sold in our wooden ware-shops, or like the islands within lakes, within islands within lakes, within islands within lakes, of which we read so much in the "Periplus" of Hanno.

A hundred criticisms to the contrary notwithstanding, I must regard "The Lady of Lyons" as one of the most successful dramatic efforts of modern times. It is popular, and justly so. It could not fail to be popular so long as the people have a heart. It abounds in sentiments which stir the soul as the sound of a trumpet. It proceeds rapidly and consequentially; the interest not for one moment being permitted to flag. Its incidents are admirably conceived and skilfully wrought into execution. Its *dramatis personæ*, throughout, have the high merit of being natural, although, except in the case of Pauline, there is no marked individuality. She is a creation which would have done no dishonor to Shakespeare. She excites profound emotion. It has been sillily objected to her, that she is weak, mercenary, and at points ignoble. She is; and what then? We are not dealing with Clarissa Harlowe. Bulwer has painted a woman. The chief defect of the play lies in the heroine's consenting to wed Beauseant, while aware of the existence and even the continued love of Claude. As the plot runs, there is a question in Pauline's soul between a comparatively trivial

(because merely worldly) injury to her father, and utter ruin and despair inflicted upon her husband. Here there should not have been an instant's hesitation. The audience have no sympathy with any. Nothing on earth should have induced the wife to give up the living Melnotte. Only the assurance of his death could have justified her in sacrificing herself to Beauseant. As it is, we hate her for the sacrifice. The effect is repulsive — but I must be understood as calling this effect objectionable solely on the ground of its being at war with the whole genius of the play.

We have long learned to reverence the fine intellect of Bulwer. We take up any production of his pen with a positive certainty that, in reading it, the wildest passions of our nature, the most profound of our thoughts, the brightest visions of our fancy, and the most ennobling and lofty of our aspirations will, in due turn, be enkindled within us. We feel sure of rising from the perusal a wiser if not a better man. In no instance are we deceived. From the brief tale — from the "Monos and Daimonos" of the author —to his most ponderous and labored novels, all is richly, and glowingly intellectual, all is energetic, or astute, or brilliant, or profound. There *may* be men now living who possess the power of Bulwer; but it is quite evident that very few have made that power so palpably manifest. Indeed we know of *none*. Viewing him as a novelist — a point of view exceedingly unfavorable (if we hold to the common acceptation of "the novel") for a proper contemplation of his genius — he is unsurpassed by any writer living or dead. Why should we hesitate to say this, feeling, as we do, thoroughly per-

suaded of its truth. Scott has excelled him in *many* points, and "The Bride of Lammermoor" is a better book than any individual work by the author of "Pelham" — "Ivanhoe" is, perhaps, equal to any. Descending to particulars, D'Israeli has a more brilliant, a more lofty, and a more delicate (we do not say a *wilder*) imagination. Lady Dacre has written "Ellen Wareham," a more forcible tale of passion. In some species of wit Theodore Hook rivals, and in broad humor our own Paulding surpasses him. The writer of "Godolphin" equals him in energy. Banim is a better sketcher of character. Hope is a richer colorist. Captain Trelawney is as original, Moore is as fanciful, and Horace Smith is as learned. But who is there uniting in one person the imagination, the passion, the humor, the energy, the knowledge of the heart, the artist-like eye, the originality, the fancy, and the learning of Edward Lytton Bulwer? In a vivid wit, in profundity and a Gothic massiveness of thought, in style, in a calm certainty and definitiveness of purpose, in industry, and above all, in the power of controlling and regulating by volition his illimitable faculties of mind, he is unequalled, he is unapproached.

The style of Bulwer's "Night and Morning" is so involute that one cannot help fancying it must be falsely constructed. If the use of language is to convey ideas, then it is nearly as much a demerit that our words seem to be, as that they are, indefensible. A man's grammar, like Cæsar's wife, must not only be pure, but above suspicion of impurity.

Dickens

The great feature of the "Old Curiosity Shop" is its chaste, vigorous, and glorious imagination. This is the one charm, all potent, which alone would suffice to compensate for a world more of error than Mr. Dickens ever committed. It is not only seen in the conception, and general handling of the story, or in the invention of character; but it pervades every sentence of the book. We recognize its prodigious influence in every inspired word. It is this which induces the reader who is at all ideal, to pause frequently, to re-read the occasionally quaint phrases, to muse in uncontrollable delight over thoughts which, while he wonders he has never hit upon them before, he yet admits that he never has encountered. In fact, it is the wand of the enchanter.

Had we room to particularize, we would mention as points evincing most distinctly the ideality of the "Old Curiosity Shop," the picture of the shop itself, the newly-born desire of the worldly old man for the peace of green fields, his whole character and conduct in short, the schoolmaster with his desolate fortunes, seeking affection in little children, the haunts of Quilp among the wharf-rats, the tinkering of the Punch-men among the tombs, the glorious scene where the man of the forge sits poring at deep midnight into that dread fire, again the whole conception of this character; and, last and greatest, the stealthy approach of Nell to her death — her gradual sinking away on the journey to the village, so skilfully indicated rather than described, her pensive and prescient meditation, the fit of strange musing which came over her when the house *in which she was to die* first

broke upon her sight, the description of this house, of the old church and of the church-yard — everything in rigid consonance with the one impression to be conveyed — that deep meaningless well, the comments of the Sexton upon death, and upon his own secure life — this whole world of mournful yet peaceful idea merging, at length, into the decease of the child Nelly, and the uncomprehending despair of the grandfather. These concluding scenes are so drawn that human language, urged by human thought, could go no farther in the excitement of human feelings. And the pathos is of that best order which is relieved, in great measure, by ideality. Here the book has never been equalled, — never approached except in one instance, and that is in the case of the "Undine" of De La Motte Fouqué. The imagination is perhaps as great in this latter work, but the pathos, although truly beautiful and deep, fails of much of its effect through the material from which it is wrought. The chief character, being endowed with purely fanciful attributes, cannot command our full sympathies, as can a simple denizen of earth. In saying, a page or so above, that the death of the child left too painful an impression, and should therefore have been avoided, we must, of course, be understood as referring to the work as a whole, and in respect to its general appreciation and popularity. The death, as recorded, is, we repeat, of the highest order of literary excellence — yet while none can deny this fact, there are few who will be willing to read the concluding passages a second time.

Upon the whole, we think the "Old Curiosity Shop" very much the best of the works of Mr. Dickens.

It is scarcely possible to speak of it too well. It is in all respects a tale which will secure for its author the enthusiastic admiration of every man of genius.

It is not every one who can put "a good thing" properly together, although, perhaps, when thus properly put together, every tenth person you meet with may be capable of both conceiving and appreciating it. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that less actual ability is required in the composition of a really good "brief article" than in a fashionable novel of the usual dimensions. The novel certainly requires what is denominated a sustained effort — but this is a matter of mere perseverance, and has but a collateral relation to talent. On the other hand — unity of effect, a quality not easily appreciated or indeed comprehended by an ordinary mind, and a *desideratum* difficult of attainment, even by those who can conceive it — is indispensable in the "brief article," and not so in the common novel. The latter, if admired at all, is admired for its detached passages, without reference to the work as a whole — or without reference to any general design — which, if it even exist in some measure, will be found to have occupied but little of the writer's attention, and cannot, from the length of the narrative, be taken in at one view, by the reader.

The art of Mr. Dickens, although elaborate and great, seems only a happy modification of Nature. In this respect he differs remarkably from the author of "Night and Morning." The latter, by excessive care and by patient reflection, aided by much rhetorical knowledge, and general information, has arrived

at the capability of producing books which might be mistaken by ninety-nine readers out of a hundred for the genuine inspirations of genius. The former, by the promptings of the truest genius itself, has been brought to compose, and evidently without effort, works which have effected a long-sought consummation — which have rendered him the idol of the people, while defying and enchanting the critics. Mr. Bulwer, through art, has almost created a genius. Mr. Dickens, through genius, has perfected a standard from which art itself will derive its essence in rules.

The serious (minor) compositions of Dickens have been lost in the blaze of his comic reputation. One of the most forcible things ever written, is a short story of his, called "The Black Veil;" a strangely pathetic and richly imaginative production, replete with the loftiest tragic power.

P. S. Mr. Dickens's head must puzzle the phrenologists. The organs of ideality are small; and the conclusion of the "Old Curiosity Shop" is more truly ideal (in both phrenological senses) than any composition of equal length in the English language.

James

The author of "Richelieu" and "Darnley" is lauded, by a great majority of those who laud him, from mere motives of duty, not of inclination — duty erroneously conceived. He is looked upon as the head and representative of those novelists who in historical romance attempt to blend interest with instruction. His sentiments are found to be pure, his *morals* unquestionable and pointedly shown forth,

his language indisputably correct. And for all this, praise, assuredly, but then only a certain degree of praise, should be awarded him. To be pure in his expressed opinions is a duty; and were his language as correct as any spoken, he would speak only as every gentleman should speak. In regard to his historical information, were it much more accurate and twice as extensive as from any visible indications we have reason to believe it, it should still be remembered that similar attainments are possessed by many thousands of well-educated men of all countries, who look upon their knowledge with no more than ordinary complacency; and that a far, very far higher reach of erudition is within the grasp of any general reader having access to the great libraries of Paris or the Vatican. Something more than we have mentioned is necessary to place our author upon a level with the best of the English novelists, for here his admirers would desire us to place him. Had Sir Walter Scott never existed, and "Waverley" never been written, we would not, of course, award Mr. James the merit of being the first to blend history, even successfully, with fiction. But as an indifferent imitator of the Scotch novelist in this respect, it is unnecessary to speak of the author of "Richelieu" any farther. To genius of any kind, it seems to us that he has little pretension. In the solemn tranquillity of his pages we seldom stumble across a novel emotion, and if any matter of deep interest arises in the path, we are pretty sure to find it an interest appertaining to some historical fact equally vivid or more so in the original chronicles.

Hood

"Frequently since his recent death," says the American editor of Hood, "he has been called a great author — a phrase used not inconsiderately or in vain." Yet, if we adopt the conventional idea of "a great author," there has lived, perhaps, no writer of the last half-century who, with equal notoriety, was less entitled than Hood to be so called. In fact, he was a literary merchant, whose main stock in trade was *littleness;* for, during the larger portion of his life, he seemed to breathe only for the purpose of perpetrating puns — things of so despicable a platitude that the man who is capable of habitually committing them is seldom found capable of anything else. Whatever merit *may* be discovered in a pun, arises altogether from *unexpectedness.* This is the pun's element, and is two-fold. First, we demand that the *combination* of the pun be unexpected; and, secondly, we require the most entire unexpectedness in the pun *per se.* A rare pun, rarely appearing, is, to a certain extent, a pleasurable effect; but to no mind, however debased in taste, is a continuous effort at punning otherwise than unendurable. The man who maintains that he derives gratification from any such chapters of punnage as Hood was in the daily practice of committing to paper, should not be credited upon oath.

The puns of the author of "Fair Inez," however, are to be regarded as the weak points of the man. Independently of their ill effect, in a literary view, as mere puns, they leave upon us a painful impression; for too evidently they are the hypochondriac's struggles at mirth — the grinnings of the death's

head. No one can read his "Literary Reminiscences" without being convinced of his habitual despondency: — and the species of false wit in question is precisely of that character which would be adopted by an author of Hood's temperament and cast of intellect, when compelled to write at an emergency. That his heart had no interest in these *niaiseries*, is clear. I allude, of course, to his *mere* puns for the pun's sake — a class of letters by which he attained his widest renown. That he did *more* in this way than in any other, is but a corollary from what I have already said, for, generally, he was unhappy, and almost continually he wrote *invita Minerva*. But his true province was a very rare and ethereal *humor*, in which the mere pun was left out of sight, or took the character of the richest grotesquerie; impressing the imaginative reader with remarkable force, as if by a new phase of the ideal. It is in this species of brilliant, or, rather, glowing grotesquerie, uttered with a rushing abandon vastly heightening its effect, that Hood's marked originality mainly consisted: — and it is this which entitles him, at times, to the epithet "great:" — for *that* undeniably may be considered great (of whatever seeming littleness in itself) which is capable of inducing intense emotion in the minds or hearts of those who are themselves undeniably great.

The field in which Hood is distinctive is a borderland between Fancy and Fantasy. In this region he reigns supreme. Nevertheless, he has made successful and frequent incursions, although vacillatingly, into the domain of the true Imagination. I mean to say that he is never truly or purely imaginative for more than a paragraph at a time. In a word, his peculiar

genius was the result of vivid Fancy impelled by Hypochondriasis.

Wilson

That Professor Wilson is one of the most gifted and altogether one of the most remarkable men of his day, few persons will be weak enough to deny. His ideality — his enthusiastic appreciation of the beautiful, conjoined with a temperament compelling him into action and expression, has been the root of his pre-eminent success. Much of it, undoubtedly, must be referred to that so-called moral courage which is but the consequence of the temperament in its physical elements. In a word, Professor Wilson is what he is, because he possesses ideality, energy, and audacity, each in a very unusual degree. The first, almost unaided by the two latter, has enabled him to produce much impression, as a poet, upon the secondary or tertiary grades of the poetic comprehension. His "Isle of Palms" appeals effectively to all those poetic intellects in which the poetic predominates greatly over the intellectual element. It is a composition which delights through the glow of its imagination, but which repels (comparatively, of course) through the *niaiseries* of its general conduct and construction. As a critic, Professor Wilson has derived, as might easily be supposed, the greatest aid from the qualities for which we have given him credit — and it is in criticism especially, that it becomes very difficult to say which of these qualities has assisted him the most. It is sheer audacity, however, to which, perhaps, after all, he is the most particularly indebted. How little he owes to intellectual pre-eminence, and how much to the mere overbearing impetuosity of his

opinions, would be a singular subject for speculation. Nevertheless it is true, that this rash spirit of domination would have served, without his rich ideality, but to hurry him into contempt. Be this as it may, in the first requisite of a critic the Scotch Aristarchus is grossly deficient. Of one who instructs we demand, in the first instance, a certain knowledge of the principles which regulate the instruction. Professor Wilson's capability is limited to a keen appreciation of the beautiful, and fastidious sense of the deformed. Why or how either is either, he never dreams of pretending to inquire, because he sees clearly his own inability to comprehend. He is no analyst. He is ignorant of the machinery of his own thoughts and the thoughts of other men. His criticism is emphatically on the surface — superficial. His opinions are mere *dicta* — unsupported *verba magistri* — and are just or unjust at the variable taste of the individual who reads them. He persuades — he bewilders — he overwhelms — at times he even argues — but there has been no period at which he ever *demonstrated* anything beyond his own utter incapacity for demonstration.

D'Israeli

One of the most singular styles in the world — certainly one of the most loose — is that of the elder D'Israeli. For example, he thus begins his chapter on Bibliomania: "The preceding article [that on Libraries] is honorable to literature." Here no self-praise is intended. The writer means to say merely that the facts narrated in the preceding article are honorable, etc. Three-fourths of his sentences are constructed in a similar manner. The blunders evi-

dently arise, however, from the author's preoccupation with his subject. His thought, or rather matter, outruns his pen, and drives him upon condensation at the expense of luminousness. The manner of D'Israeli has many of the traits of Gibbon — although little of the latter's precision.

Marvell

How truthful an air of deep lamentation hangs here[1] upon every gentle syllable! It pervades all. It comes over the sweet melody of the words, over the gentleness and grace which we fancy in the little maiden herself, — even over the half-playful, half-petulant air with which she lingers on the beauties and good qualities of her favorite, like the cool shadow of a summer cloud over a bed of lilies and violets, and "all sweet flowers." The whole thing is redolent with poetry of the very loftiest order. It is positively crowded with nature and with pathos. Every line is an idea, conveying either the beauty and playfulness of the fawn, or the artlessness of the maiden, or the love of the maiden, or her admiration, or her grief, or the fragrance, and sweet warmth, and perfect *appropriateness* of the little nest-like bed of lilies and roses, which the fawn devoured as it lay upon them, and could scarcely be distinguished from them by the once happy little damsel who went to seek her pet with an arch and rosy smile upon her face. Consider the great variety of *truth* and delicate thought in the few lines we have quoted — the *wonder* of the maiden at the fleetness of her favorite — the "little silver feet" — the fawn challenging his mistress to the race, "with a pretty

[1] "The Nymph complaining for the Death of her Fawn," by Andrew Marvell.

skipping grace," running on before, and then, with head turned back, awaiting her approach only to fly from it again — can we not distinctly perceive all these things? The exceeding vigor, too, and beauty of the line,

"*And trod as if on the four winds,*"

which are vividly apparent when we regard the artless nature of the speaker, and the *four feet* of the favorite — *one for each wind.* Then the garden of "*my own,*" so overgrown — entangled — with lilies and roses as to be "a little wilderness" — the fawn loving to be there and there "*only*" — the maiden seeking it "where it *should* lie," and not being able to distinguish it from the flowers until "itself would rise" — the lying among the lilies "like a bank of lilies" — the loving to "*fill*" itself with roses,

"And its pure virgin limbs to fold
In whitest sheets of lilies cold,"

and these things being its "*chief*" delights — and then the pre-eminent beauty and naturalness of the concluding lines — whose very outrageous hyperbole and absurdity only render them the more true to nature and to propriety, when we consider the innocence, the artlessness, the enthusiasm, the passionate grief, and more passionate admiration of the bereaved child.

"*Had it lived long it would have been*
Lilies without — roses within."

Petrarch

We are not among those who regard the genius of Petrarch as a subject for enthusiastic admiration. The characteristics of his poetry are not traits of the

highest, or even of a high order; and in accounting for his fame, the discriminating critic will look rather to the circumstances which surrounded the man, than to the literary merits of the pertinacious sonneteer. Grace and tenderness we grant him — but these qualities are surely insufficient to establish his poetical apotheosis.

In other respects he is entitled to high consideration. As a patriot, notwithstanding some accusations which have been rather urged than established, we can only regard him with approval. In his republican principles; in his support of Rienzi at the risk of the displeasure of the Colonna family; in his whole political conduct, in short, he seems to have been nobly and disinterestedly zealous for the welfare of his country. But Petrarch is most important when we look upon him as the bridge by which, over the dark gulf of the middle ages, the knowledge of the old world made its passage into the new. His influence on what is termed the revival of letters was, perhaps, greater than that of any man who ever lived; certainly far greater than that of any of his immediate contemporaries. His ardent zeal in recovering and transcribing the lost treasures of antique lore cannot be too highly appreciated. But for him, many of our most valued classics might have been numbered with Pindar's hymns and dithyrambics. He devoted days and nights to this labor of love; snatching numerous precious books from the very brink of oblivion. His judgment in these things was strikingly correct, while his erudition, for the age in which he lived, and for the opportunities he enjoyed, has always been a subject of surprise.

Byron

"*Les anges*," says Madame Dudevant, a woman who intersperses many an admirable sentiment amid a chaos of the most shameless and altogether objectionable fiction — "*Les anges ne sont plus purs que le cœur d'un jeune homme qui aime en vérité.*" "The angels are not more pure than the heart of a young man who loves with fervor." The hyperbole is scarcely less than true. It would be truth itself, were it averred of the love of him who is at the same time young and a poet. The boyish poet-love is indisputably that one of the human sentiments which most nearly realizes our dreams of the chastened voluptuousness of heaven.

In every allusion made by the author of "Childe Harold" to his passion for Mary Chaworth, there runs a vein of almost spiritual tenderness and purity, strongly in contrast with the gross earthliness pervading and disfiguring his ordinary love-poems. "The Dream," in which the incidents of his parting with her when about to travel are said to be delineated, or at least paralleled, has never been excelled (certainly never excelled by him) in the blended fervor, delicacy, truthfulness, and ethereality which sublimate and adorn it. For this reason, it may well be doubted if he has written anything so universally popular. That his attachment for this "Mary" (in whose very name there indeed seemed to exist for him an "enchantment") was earnest and long-abiding, we have every reason to believe. There are a hundred evidences of this fact, scattered not only through his own poems and letters, but in the memoirs of his relatives, and contemporaries in general. But that it *was* thus earnest and

enduring, does not controvert, in any degree, the opinion that it was a passion (if passion it can properly be termed) of the most thoroughly romantic, shadowy, and imaginative character. It was born of the hour, and of the youthful necessity to love, while it was nurtured by the waters and the hills, and the flowers, and the stars. It had no peculiar regard to the person, or to the character, or to the reciprocating affection of Mary Chaworth. Any maiden, not immediately and positively repulsive, he would have loved, under the same circumstances of hourly and unrestricted communion, such as the engravings of the subject shadow forth. They met without restraint and without reserve. As mere children they sported together; in boyhood and girlhood they read from the same books, sang the same songs, or roamed hand in hand through the grounds of the conjoining estates. The result was not merely natural or merely probable — it was as inevitable as destiny itself.

In view of a passion thus engendered, Miss Chaworth (who is represented as possessed of no little personal beauty and some accomplishments) could not have failed to serve sufficiently well as the incarnation of the ideal that haunted the fancy of the poet. It is perhaps better, nevertheless, for the mere romance of the love-passages between the two, that their intercourse was broken up in early life and never uninterruptedly resumed in after years. Whatever of warmth, whatever of soul-passion, whatever of the truer nare and essentiality of romance was elicited during the youthful association is to be attributed altogether to the poet. If *she* felt at all, it was only while the magnetism of *his* actual presence compelled her to feel. If *she* responded at all, it was merely because the

necromancy of *his* words of fire could not do otherwise than extort a response. In absence, the bard bore easily with him all the fancies which were the basis of his flame — a flame which absence itself but served to keep in vigor; while the less ideal but at the same time the less really substantial affection of his lady-love perished utterly and forthwith through simple lack of the element which had fanned it into being. He to her, in brief, was a not unhandsome and not ignoble, but somewhat portionless, somewhat eccentric and rather lame young man. She to him was the Egeria of his dreams — the Venus Aphrodite that sprang, in full and supernal loveliness, from the bright foam upon the storm-tormented ocean of his thoughts.

Paulding's "Washington"

We have read Mr. Paulding's "Life of Washington" with a degree of interest seldom excited in us by the perusal of any book whatever. We are convinced by a deliberate examination of the design, manner, and rich material of the work, that, as it grows in age, it will grow in the estimation of our countrymen, and, finally, will not fail to take a deeper hold upon the public mind, and upon the public affections, than any work upon the same subject, or of a similar nature, which has been yet written — or, possibly, which may be written hereafter. Indeed, we cannot perceive the necessity of anything farther upon the great theme of Washington. Mr. Paulding has completely and most beautifully filled the vacuum which the works of Marshall and Sparks have left open. He has painted the boy, the man, the husband, and the Christian. He has introduced us to the private affections, aspirations,

and charities of that hero whose affections of all affections were the most serene, whose aspirations the most God-like, and whose charities the most gentle and pure. He has taken us abroad with the patriot-farmer in his rambles about his homestead. He has seated us in his study and shown us the warrior-Christian in unobtrusive communion with his God. He has done all this too, and more, in a simple and quiet manner, in a manner peculiarly his own, and which, mainly because it is his own, cannot fail to be exceedingly effective. Yet it is very possible that the public may, for many years to come, overlook the rare merits of a work whose want of arrogant assumption is so little in keeping with the usages of the day, and whose striking simplicity and *naïveté* of manner give, to a cursory examination, so little evidence of the labor of composition. We have no fears, however, for the future. Such books as these before us go down to posterity like rich wines, with a certainty of being more valued as they go. They force themselves, with the gradual but rapidly accumulating power of strong wedges, into the hearts and understandings of a community.

In regard to the style of Mr. Paulding's "Washington," it would scarcely be doing it justice to speak of it merely as well adapted to its subject and to its immediate design. Perhaps a rigorous examination would detect an occasional want of euphony and some inaccuracies of syntactical arrangement. But nothing could be more out of place than any such examination in respect to a book whose forcible, rich, vivid, and comprehensive English might advantageously be held up as a model for the young writers of the land. There is no better literary manner than the manner of

Mr. Paulding. Certainly no American, and possibly no living writer of England, has more of those numerous peculiarities which go to the formation of a happy style. It is questionable, we think, whether any writer of any country combines as many of these peculiarities with as much of that essential negative virtue, the absence of affectation. We repeat, as our confident opinion, that it would be difficult, even with great care and labor, to improve upon the general manner of the volumes now before us, and that they contain many long individual passages of a force and beauty not to be surpassed by the finest passages of the finest writers in any time or country. It is this striking character in the "Washington" of Mr. Paulding — striking and peculiar indeed at a season when we are so culpably inattentive to all matters of this nature as to mistake for style the fine airs at second hand of the silliest romancers — it is this character, we say, which should insure the fulfilment of the writer's principal design, in the immediate introduction of his book into every respectable academy in the land.

Hudson

Of Berryer, somebody says "he is the man in whose description is the greatest possible consumption of antithesis." For "description" read "lectures," and the sentence would apply well to Hudson, the lecturer on Shakespeare. Antithesis is his end — he has no other. He does not employ it to enforce thought, but he gathers thought from all quarters with the sole view to its capacity for antithetical expression. His essays have thus only paragraphical effect; as wholes, they produce not the slightest impression. No man

living could say what it is Mr. Hudson proposes to demonstrate; and if the question were propounded to Mr. Hudson himself, we can fancy how particularly embarrassed he would be for a reply. In the end, were he to answer honestly, he would say — "*antithesis*." As for his reading, Julius Cæsar would have said of him that he sang ill, and undoubtedly he must have "gone to the dogs" for his experience in pronouncing the *r* as if his throat were bored like a rifle-barrel.

Newnham's "Human Magnetism"

A book which puzzles me beyond measure, since, while agreeing with its general conclusions (except where it discusses prevision), I invariably find fault with the reasoning through which the conclusions are attained. I think the treatise grossly illogical throughout. For example, the origin of the work is thus stated in an introductory chapter: —

"About twelve months since, I was asked by some friends to write a paper against Mesmerism, and I was furnished with materials by a highly esteemed quondam pupil, which proved incontestably that under some circumstances the operator might be duped, that hundreds of enlightened persons might equally be deceived, and certainly went far to show that the pretended science was wholly a delusion — a system of fraud and jugglery by which the imaginations of the credulous were held in thraldom through the arts of the designing. Perhaps in an evil hour I assented to the proposition thus made; but, on reflection, I found that the facts before me only led to the *direct proof* that certain phenomena might be counterfeited; and the existence of counterfeit coin is rather a

proof that there is somewhere the genuine standard gold to be imitated."

The fallacy here lies in a mere variation of what is called "begging the question." Counterfeit coin is said to prove the existence of genuine: — this, of course, is no more than the truism that there can be no counterfeit where there is no genuine — just as there can be no badness where there is no goodness — the terms being purely relative. But *because* there can be no counterfeit where there is no original, does it in any manner follow that any undemonstrated original exists? In seeing a spurious coin we know it to be such by comparison with coins *admitted* to be genuine; but were *no* coin admitted to be genuine, how should we establish the counterfeit, and what right should we have to talk of counterfeits at all? Now, in the case of Mesmerism, our author is merely *begging the admission.* In saying that the existence of counterfeit proves the existence of real Mesmerism, he demands that the real *be admitted.* Either he demands this or there is no shadow of force in his proposition — for it is clear that we can *pretend to be* that which is not. A man, for instance, may feign himself a sphinx or a griffin, but it would never do to regard as thus demonstrated the actual existence of either griffins or sphinxes. A word alone — the word "counterfeit" — has been sufficient to lead Mr. Newnham astray. People cannot be properly said to "counterfeit" prevision, etc., but to *feign* these phenomena. Dr. Newnham's argument, of course, is by no means original with him, although he seems to pride himself on it as if it were. Dr. More says: "That there should be so universal a fame and fear of that which never was, nor is, nor

can be ever in the world, is to me the greatest miracle of all. If there had not been, at some time or other, true miracles, it had not been so easy to impose on the people by false. The alchemist would never go about to sophisticate metals, to pass them off for true gold and silver, unless that such a thing was acknowledged as true gold and silver in the world." This is precisely the same idea as that of Dr. Newnham, and belongs to that extensive class of argumentation which is *all point* — deriving its whole effect from epigrammatism. That the belief in ghosts, or in a Deity, or in a future state, or in anything else credible or incredible — that any such belief is universal — demonstrates nothing more than that which needs no demonstration — the human unanimity, the identity of construction in the human brain, an identity of which the inevitable result must be upon the whole similar deductions from similar *data.* Most especially do I disagree with the author of this book in his (implied) disparagement of the work of Chauncey Hare Townshend — a work to be valued properly only in a day to come.

Longfellow's "Proem" to "The Waif"

"The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight."

The *single* feather here is imperfectly illustrative of the omniprevalent darkness; but a more especial objection is the likening of one feather to the falling of another. Night is personified as a bird, and darkness — the feather of this bird — falls from it, how? —

as another feather falls from another bird. Why, it does this *of course*. The illustration is identical — that is to say, null. It has no more force than an identical proposition in logic.

The conclusion of the "Proem" in Mr. Longfellow's late "Waif" is exceedingly beautiful. The whole poem is remarkable in this, that one of its principal excellences arises from what is, generically, a demerit. No error, for example, is more certainly fatal in poetry than defective *rhythm*; but here the *slipshoddiness* is so thoroughly in unison with the nonchalant air of the thoughts — which again are so capitally applicable to the thing done (a mere introduction of other people's fancies) — that the effect of the looseness of rhythm becomes palpable, and we see at once that here is a case in which to be *correct* would be inartistic. Here are three of the quatrains —

"I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist —

"A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
And *resembles sorrow only*
As the mist resembles the rain.

"And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

Now these lines are not to be scanned. They are referable to no true principles of rhythm. The general idea is that of a succession of anapæsts; yet not only is this idea confounded with that of dactyls, but this succession is improperly interrupted at all points

— improperly, because by unequivalent feet. The partial prosaicism thus brought about, however (without any interference with the mere melody), becomes a beauty solely through the nicety of its adaptation to the tone of the poem, and of this tone, again, to the matter in hand. In his keen sense of this adaptation (which conveys the notion of what is vaguely termed "ease"), the reader so far loses sight of the rhythmical imperfection that he can be convinced of its existence only by treating in the same rhythm (or, rather, lack of rhythm) a subject of different tone — a subject in which decision shall take the place of nonchalance. Now, undoubtedly, I intend all this as complimentary to Mr. Longfellow; but it was for the utterance of these very opinions in the New York "Mirror" that I was accused, by some of the poet's friends, of inditing what they think proper to call "strictures" on the author of "Outre-Mer."

Annihilation

We might contrive a very poetical and very suggestive, although, perhaps, no very tenable philosophy, by supposing that the virtuous live while the wicked suffer annihilation, hereafter; and that the danger of the annihilation (which danger would be in the ratio of the sin) might be indicated nightly by slumber, and occasionally, with more distinctness, by a swoon. In proportion to the dreamlessness of the sleep, for example, would be the degree of the soul's liability to annihilation. In the same way, to swoon and awake in utter unconsciousness of any lapse of time during the syncope would demonstrate the soul to have been then in such condition that, had death occurred, annihilation would have followed. On the other hand, when the revival is attended with remem-

brance of visions (as is now and then the case, in fact), then the soul is to be considered in such condition as would insure its existence after the bodily death — the bliss or wretchedness of the existence to be indicated by the character of the visions.

The Critic

When we attend less to "authority" and more to principles, when we look *less* at merit and *more* at demerit (instead of the converse, as some persons suggest), we shall then be better critics than we are. We must neglect our models, and study our capabilities. The mad eulogies, on what occasionally has, in letters, been well done, spring from our imperfect comprehension of what it is possible for us to do better. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon; a man who has seen neither moon nor sun cannot be blamed for expatiating on the incomparable effulgence of the morning star." Now, it is the business of the critic so to soar that he shall *see the sun*, even although its orb be far below the ordinary horizon.

Defoe

While Defoe would have been fairly entitled to immortality had he never written "Robinson Crusoe" yet his many other very excellent writings have nearly faded from our attention, in the superior lustre of the "Adventures of the Mariner of York." What better possible species of reputation could the author have desired for that book than the species which it has so long enjoyed? It has become a household thing in

nearly every family in Christendom. Yet never was admiration of any work — universal admiration — more indiscriminately or more inappropriately bestowed. Not one person in ten — nay, not one person in five hundred — has, during the perusal of "Robinson Crusoe," the most remote conception that any particle of genius, or even of common talent, has been employed in its creation! Men do not look upon it in the light of a literary performance. Defoe has none of their thoughts — Robinson all. The powers which have wrought the wonder have been thrown into obscurity by the very stupendousness of the wonder they have wrought! We read, and become perfect abstractions in the intensity of our interest; we close the book, and are quite satisfied that we could have written as well ourselves. All this is effected by the potent magic of verisimilitude. Indeed the author of "Crusoe" must have possessed, above all other faculties, what has been termed the faculty of *identification* — that dominion exercised by volition over imagination, which enables the mind to lose its own in a fictitious individuality. This includes, in a very great degree, the power of abstraction; and with these keys we may partially unlock the mystery of that spell which has so long invested the volume before us. But a complete analysis of our interest in it cannot be thus afforded. Defoe is largely indebted to his subject. The idea of man in a state of perfect isolation, although often entertained, was never before so comprehensively carried out. Indeed the frequency of its occurrence to the thoughts of mankind argued the extent of its influence on their sympathies, while the fact of no attempt having been made to give an embodied form to the conception went

to prove the difficulty of the undertaking. But the true narrative of Selkirk in 1711, with the powerful impression it then made upon the public mind, sufficed to inspire Defoe with both the necessary courage for his work, and entire confidence in its success. How wonderful has been the result!

The Drama

The drama, as the chief of the imitative arts, has a tendency to beget and keep alive in its votaries the imitative propensity. This might be supposed *a priori*, and experience confirms the supposition. Of all imitators, dramatists are the most perverse, the most unconscionable, or the most unconscious, and have been so time out of mind. Euripides and Sophocles were merely echoes of Æschylus, and not only was Terence Menander and nothing beyond, but of the sole Roman tragedies extant (the ten attributed to Seneca), nine are on Greek subjects. Here, then, is cause enough for the "decline of the drama," if we are to believe that the drama has declined. But it has not: on the contrary, during the last fifty years it has materially advanced. All other arts, however, have, in the same interval, advanced at a far greater rate — each very nearly in the direct ratio of its non-imitativeness — painting, for example, least of all — and the effect on the drama is, of course, that of apparent retrogradation.

Heber

The qualities of Heber are well understood. His poetry is of a high order. He is imaginative, glow-

ing, and vigorous, with a skill in the management of his means unsurpassed by that of any writer of his time, but without any high degree of originality. Can there be anything in the nature of a "classical" life at war with novelty *per se?* At all events, few fine scholars, such as Heber truly was, *are* original.

Original Characters

Original characters, so called, can only be critically praised as such, either when presenting qualities known in real life but never before depicted (a combination nearly impossible), or when presenting qualities (moral, or physical, or both) which, although unknown, or even known to be hypothetical, are so skilfully adapted to the circumstances which surround them that our sense of fitness is not offended, and we find ourselves seeking a reason why those things might not have been, which we are still satisfied are not. The latter species of originality appertains to the loftier regions of the Ideal.

Beverly Tucker

"George Balcombe," we are induced to regard, upon the whole, as *the best* American novel. There have been few books of its peculiar kind, we think, written in *any* country, much its superior. Its interest is intense from beginning to end. Talent of a lofty order is evinced in every page of it. Its most distinguishing features are invention, vigor, almost audacity, of thought — great variety of what the German critics term "intrigue," and exceeding ingenuity and finish in the adaptation of its component parts.

Nothing is wanting to a complete whole, and nothing is out of place, or out of time. Without being chargeable in the least degree with imitation, the novel bears a strong family resemblance to the "Caleb Williams" of Godwin. Thinking thus highly of "George Balcombe," we still do not wish to be understood as ranking it with the more brilliant fictions of some of the living novelists of Great Britain. In regard to the authorship of the book, some little conversation has occurred, and the matter is still considered a secret. But why so? — or rather, *how so?* The mind of the chief personage of the story is the transcript of a mind familiar to us — an unintentional transcript, let us grant — but still one not to be mistaken. George Balcombe thinks, speaks, and acts as no person, we are convinced, but Judge Beverly Tucker, ever precisely thought, spoke, or acted before.

Mill

Mill says that he has "demonstrated" his propositions. Just in the same way Anaxagoras demonstrated snow to be black (which, perhaps, it is, if we could see the thing in the proper light), and just in the same way the French advocate, Linguet, with Hippocrates in his hand, demonstrated bread to be a slow poison. The worst of the matter is, that propositions such as these seldom *stay* demonstrated long enough to be thoroughly understood.

The *a priori* reasoners upon government are, of all plausible people, the most preposterous. They only argue too cleverly to permit my thinking them silly enough to be themselves deceived by their own argu-

ments. Yet even this is possible; for there is something in the vanity of logic which addles a man's brains. Your true logician gets, in time, to be logicalized, and then, so far as regards himself, the universe is one *word*. A thing, for him, no longer exists. He deposits upon a sheet of paper a certain assemblage of syllables, and fancies that their meaning is riveted by the act of deposition. I am serious in the opinion that some such process of thought passes through the mind of the "practised" logician, as he makes note of the thesis proposed. He is not aware that he thinks in this way — but, unwittingly, he so thinks. The syllables deposited acquire, in his view, a new character. While afloat in his brain, he might have been brought to admit the possibility that these syllables were variable exponents of various phases of thought; but he will not admit this if he once gets them upon the paper.

In a single page of "Mill," I find the word "force" employed four times; and each employment varies the idea. The fact is that *a priori* argument is much worse than useless except in the mathematical sciences, where it is possible to obtain *precise* meanings. If there is any one subject in the world to which it is utterly and radically inapplicable, that subject is Government. The identical arguments used to sustain Mr. Bentham's positions, might, with little exercise of ingenuity, be made to overthrow them; and, by ringing small changes on the words "leg of mutton," and "turnip" (changes so gradual as to escape detection) I could "demonstrate" that a turnip was, is, and of right ought to be, a leg of mutton.

"IDOLS"

Among his *eidola* of the den, the tribe, the forum, the theatre, etc., Bacon might well have placed the great *eidolon* of the parlor (or of the wit, as I have termed it in one of the previous Marginalia) — the idol whose worship blinds man to truth by dazzling him with the *apposite*. But what title could have been invented for *that* idol which has propagated, perhaps, more of gross error than all combined? — the one, I mean, which demands from its votaries that they reciprocate cause and effect — reason in a circle — lift themselves from the ground by pulling up their pantaloons — and carry themselves on their own heads, in hand-baskets, from Beersheba to Dan.

All — absolutely all the argumentation which I have seen on the nature of the soul, or of the Deity, seems to me nothing but worship of this unnamable idol. "*Pour savoir ce qu'est Dieu*," says Bielfeld, although nobody "listens to the solemn truth," *il faut être Dieu même* — and to reason about the reason is of all things the most unreasonable. At least, he alone is fit to discuss the topic who perceives at a glance the insanity of its discussion.

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We might give two plausible derivations of the epithet "weeping" as applied to the willow. We might say that the word has its origin in the pendulous character of the long branches, which suggest the idea of water dripping; or we might assert that the term comes from a fact in the natural history of the tree. It has a vast insensible perspiration, which, upon sudden cold, condenses, and sometimes is precipitated in a shower. Now, one might very accurately

determine the bias and value of a man's powers of causality, by observing which of these two derivations he would adopt. The former is, beyond question, the true; and, for this reason — that common or vulgar epithets are universally suggested by common or immediately obvious things, without strict regard of any exactitude in application: — but the latter would be greedily seized by nine philologists out of ten, for no better cause than its *epigrammatism* — than the pointedness with which the singular fact seems to touch the occasion. Here, then, is a subtle source of error which Lord Bacon has neglected. It is an Idol *of the Wit*.

Coleridge's "Table Talk"

The title of this book deceives us. It is by no means "talk" as men understand it — not that true talk of which Boswell has been the best historiographer. In a word it is not *gossip*, which has been never better defined than by Basil, who calls it "talk for talk's sake," nor more thoroughly comprehended than by Horace Walpole and Mary Wortley Montagu, who made it a profession and a purpose. Embracing all things, it has neither beginning, middle, nor end. Thus of the gossiper it was not properly said that "he commences his discourse by jumping *in medias res*." For, clearly, your gossiper commences not at all. He is begun. He is already begun. He is always begun. In the matter of end he is indeterminate. And by these extremes shall ye know him to be of the Cæsars — *porphyrogenitus* — of the right vein — of the true blood — of the blue blood — of the *sangre azul*. As for laws, he is cognizant of but one, the invariable

absence of all. And for his road, were it as straight as the Appia and as broad as that "which leadeth to destruction," nevertheless would he be malcontent without a frequent hop-skip-and-jump over the hedges into the tempting pastures of digression beyond. Such is the gossiper, and of such alone is the true *talk*. But when Coleridge asked Lamb if he had ever heard him *preach*, the answer was quite happy — "I have never heard you do anything else." The truth is that "Table Discourse" might have answered as a title to this book; but its character can be fully conveyed only in "Post-Prandian Sub-Sermons," or "Three-Bottle Sermonoids."

Antique Poetry

It cannot, we think, be a matter of doubt with any reflecting mind, that at least one-third of the reverence, or of the affection, with which we regard the elder poets of Great Britain, should be credited to what is, in itself, a thing apart from poetry — we mean to the simple love of the antique; and that again a third of even the proper *poetic sentiment* inspired by these writings should be ascribed to a fact which, while it has a strict connection with poetry in the abstract, and also with the particular poems in question, must not be looked upon as a merit appertaining to the writers of the poems. Almost every devout reader of the old English bards, if demanded his opinion of their productions, would mention vaguely, yet with perfect sincerity, a sense of dreamy, wild, indefinite, and, he would perhaps say, undefinable delight. Upon being required to point out the source of this so shadowy pleasure, he would be apt to speak of the quaint in phraseology and of the grotesque in rhythm. And

this quaintness and grotesqueness are, as we have elsewhere endeavored to show, very powerful, and, if well managed, very admissible adjuncts to ideality. But in the present instance they arise independently of the author's will, and are matters altogether apart from his intention.

Fashionable Novels

Among the moralists who keep themselves erect by the perpetual swallowing of pokers, it is the fashion to decry the "fashionable" novels. These works have their demerits; but a vast influence which they exert for an undeniable good, has never yet been duly considered.

> "Ingenu*os* didicisse fideliter *libros*
> Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros."

Now, the fashionable novels are just the books which most do circulate among the class *un*fashionable; and their effect in softening the worst callosities — in smoothing the most disgusting asperities of vulgarism, is prodigious. With the herd, to admire and to attempt imitation are the same thing. What if, in this case, the manners imitated are frippery; better frippery than brutality — and, after all, there is little danger that the intrinsic value of the sturdiest iron will be impaired by a coating of even the most diaphanous gilt.

Tennyson

I am not sure that Tennyson is not the greatest of poets. The uncertainty attending the public conception of the term "poet" alone prevents me from demonstrating that he *is*. Other bards produce effects

which are, now and then, otherwise produced than by what we call poems; but Tennyson an effect which only a poem does. His alone are idiosyncratic poems. By the enjoyment or non-enjoyment of the "Morte D'Arthur," or of the "Œnone," I would test any one's ideal sense. There are passages in his works which rivet a conviction I had long entertained, that the *indefinite* is an element in the true ποιῆσις. Why do some persons fatigue themselves in attempts to unravel such fantasy-pieces as "The Lady of Shalott"? As well unweave the "*ventum textilem*." If the author did not deliberately propose to himself a suggestive indefinitiveness of meaning, with the view of bringing about a definitiveness of vague and therefore of spiritual *effect* — this, at least, arose from the silent analytical promptings of that poetic genius which, in its supreme development, embodies all orders of intellectual capacity. I *know* that indefinitiveness is an element of the true music — I mean of the true musical expression. Give to it any undue decision — imbue it with any very determinate tone — and you deprive it, at once, of its ethereal, its ideal, its intrinsic and essential character. You dispel its luxury of dream. You dissolve the atmosphere of the mystic upon which it floats. You exhaust it of its breath of feäry. It now becomes a tangible and easily appreciable idea — a thing of the earth, earthy. It has not, indeed, lost its power to please, but all which I consider the distinctiveness of that power. And to the uncultivated talent, or to the unimaginative apprehension, this deprivation of its most delicate nare will be, not unfrequently, a recommendation. A determinateness of expression is sought — and often by composers who should know better — is sought as a

beauty rather than rejected as a blemish. Thus we have, even from high authorities, attempts at absolute *imitation* in music. Who can forget the silliness of the "Battle of Prague"? What man of taste but must laugh at the interminable drums, trumpets, blunderbusses, and thunder? "*Vocal* music," says L'Abbate Gravina, who would have said the same thing of instrumental, "ought to imitate the natural language of the human feelings and passions, rather than the warblings of Canary birds, which our singers, now-a-days, affect so vastly to mimic with their quaverings and boasted cadences." This is true only so far as the "rather" is concerned. If any music must imitate anything, it were assuredly better to limit the imitation as Gravina suggests. Tennyson's shorter pieces abound in minute rhythmical lapses sufficient to assure me that — in common with all poets living or dead — he has neglected to make precise investigation of the principles of metre; but, on the other hand, so perfect is his rhythmical instinct in general, that, like the present Viscount Canterbury, he seems *to see with his ear.*

Dreams

Some Frenchman — possibly Montaigne — says: "People talk about thinking, but for my part I never think, except when I sit down to write." It is this never thinking, unless when we sit down to write, which is the cause of so much indifferent composition. But perhaps there is something more involved in the Frenchman's observation than meets the eye. It is certain that the mere act of inditing tends, in a great degree, to the logicalization of thought. When-

ever, on account of its vagueness, I am dissatisfied with a conception of the brain, I resort forthwith to the pen, for the purpose of obtaining, through its aid, the necessary form, consequence, and precision.

How very commonly we hear it remarked, that such and such thoughts are beyond the compass of words! I do not believe that any thought, properly so called, is out of the reach of language. I fancy, rather, that where difficulty in expression is experienced, there is, in the intellect which experiences it, a want either of deliberateness or of method. For my own part, I have never had a thought which I could not set down in words with even more distinctness than that with which I conceived it; as I have before observed, the thought is logicalized by the effort at (written) expression. There is, however, a class of fancies, of exquisite delicacy, which are *not* thoughts, and to which, *as yet*, I have found it absolutely impossible to adapt language. I use the word "fancies" at random, and merely because I must use some word; but the idea commonly attached to the term is not even remotely applicable to the shadows of shadows in question. They seem to me rather psychal than intellectual. They arise in the soul (alas, how rarely!) only at its epochs of most intense tranquillity — when the bodily and mental health are in perfection — and at those mere points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams. I am aware of these "fancies" only when I am upon the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that I am so. I have satisfied myself that this condition exists but for an inappreciable point of time — yet it is crowded with these "shadows of shadows;" and for absolute thought there is demanded time's endurance.

These "fancies" have in them a pleasurable ecstasy, as far beyond the most pleasurable of the world of wakefulness, or of dreams, as the heaven of the Northman theology is beyond its hell. I regard the visions, even as they arise, with an awe which, in some measure, moderates or tranquillizes the ecstasy — I so regard them, through a conviction (which seems a portion of the ecstasy itself) that this ecstasy, in itself, is of a character supernal to the human nature, is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world; and I arrive at this conclusion, if this term is at all applicable to instantaneous intuition, by a perception that the delight experienced has, as its element, but *the absoluteness of novelty*. I say the absoluteness; for in these fancies — let me now term them psychal impressions — there is really nothing even approximate in character to impressions ordinarily received. It is as if the five senses were supplanted by five myriad others alien to mortality.

Now, so entire is my faith in the *power of words*, that, at times, I have believed it possible to embody even the evanescence of fancies such as I have attempted to describe. In experiments with this end in view, I have proceeded so far as, first, to control (when the bodily and mental health are good) the existence of the condition: — that is to say, I can now (unless when ill) be sure that the condition will supervene, if I so wish it, at the point of time already described: — of its supervention, until lately, I could never be certain, even under the most favorable circumstances. I mean to say, merely, that now I can be sure, when all circumstances are favorable, of the supervention of the condition, and feel even the capacity of inducing or compelling it: — the favor-

able circumstances, however, are not the less rare — else had I compelled, already, the heaven into the earth.

I have proceeded so far, secondly, as to prevent the lapse from *the point* of which I speak — the point of blending between wakefulness and sleep — as to prevent at will, I say, the lapse from this border-ground into the dominion of sleep. Not that I can *continue* the condition — not that I can render the point more than a point — but that I can startle myself from the point into wakefulness, *and thus transfer the point itself into the realm of Memory;* convey its impressions, or more properly their recollections, to a situation where (although still for a very brief period) I can survey them with the eye of analysis. For these reasons — that is to say, because I have been enabled to accomplish thus much — I do not altogether despair of embodying in words at least enough of the fancies in question to convey to certain classes of intellect a shadowy conception of their character. In saying this I am not to be understood as supposing that the fancies, or psychal impressions, to which I allude, are confined to my individual self — are not, in a word, common to all mankind, for on this point it is quite impossible that I should form an opinion; but nothing can be more certain than that even a partial record of the impressions would startle the universal intellect of mankind by the *supremeness of the novelty* of the material employed and of its consequent suggestions. In a word, should I ever write a paper on this topic, the world will be compelled to acknowledge that, at last, I have done an original thing.

A Suggestion for a Magazine Article

Here is a good idea for a magazine paper; let somebody "work it up:" — A flippant pretender to universal acquirement — a would-be Crichton — engrosses, for an hour or two, perhaps, the attention of a large company, most of whom are profoundly impressed by his knowledge. He is very witty, in especial, at the expense of a modest young gentleman, who ventures to make no reply, and who, finally, leaves the room as if overwhelmed with confusion; the Crichton greeting his exit with a laugh. Presently he returns, followed by a footman carrying an armful of books. These are deposited on the table. The young gentleman, now, referring to some pencilled notes which he had been secretly taking during the Crichton's display of erudition, pins the latter to his statements, each by each, and refutes them all in turn, by reference to the very authorities cited by the egotist himself, whose ignorance at all points is thus made apparent.

Religion

After reading all that has been written, and after thinking all that can be thought, on the topics of God and the soul, the man who has a right to say that he thinks at all will find himself face to face with the conclusion that, on these topics, the most profound thought is that which can be the least easily distinguished from the most superficial sentiment.

Reform

"If in any point," says Lord Bacon, "I have receded from what is commonly received, it hath been

for the purpose of proceeding *melius* and not *in aliud*" — but the character assumed, in general, by modern "Reform" is, simply, that of Opposition.

The modern reformist philosophy which annihilates the individual by way of aiding the mass, and the late reformist legislation, which prohibits pleasure with the view of advancing happiness, seem to be chips of that old block of a French feudal law which, to prevent young partridges from being disturbed, imposed penalties upon hoeing and weeding.

Paulus Jovius

Paulus Jovius, living in those benighted times when diamond-pointed styluses were as yet unknown, thought proper, nevertheless, to speak of his goose-quill as "*aliquando ferreus, aureus aliquando*" — intending, of course, a mere figure of speech; and from the class of modern authors who use really nothing to write with but steel and gold, some, no doubt, will let their pens, *vice versa*, descend to posterity under the designation of "anserine" — of course, intending always a mere figure of speech.

Carlylese

The Carlyle-ists should adopt, as a motto, the inscription on the old bell from whose metal was cast the Great Tom, of Oxford: — "In *Thomæ* laude resono 'Bim! Bom!' sine fraude:" — and "Bim! Bom," in such case, would be a marvellous "echo of sound to sense."

Man, a Cosmopolite

An infinity of error makes its way into our Philosophy, through man's habit of considering himself a citizen of a world solely — of an individual planet — instead of at least occasionally contemplating his position as cosmopolite proper — as a denizen of the universe.

A Pun

Talking of puns: — "Why do they not give us quail for dinner, as usual?" demanded Count Fessis, the other day, of H ——, the classicist and sportsman.

"Because at this season," replied H ——, who was dozing, — "*qualis sopor fessis.*" (Quail is so poor, Fessis.)

Transcendental Criticism

The German "*Schwärmerei*" — not exactly "humbug," but "sky-rocketing" — seems to be the only term by which we can conveniently designate that peculiar style of criticism which has lately come into fashion, through the influence of certain members of the *Fabian* family — people who live (upon beans) about Boston.

Truth

"This is right," says Epicurus, "precisely because the people are displeased with it."

"*Il y a à parier*," says Chamfort — one of the *Kamkars* of Mirabeau — "*que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise car elle a convenu au plus grand nombre.*"

"*Si proficere cupis*," says the great African bishop,

"*primo id verum puta quod sana mens omnium hominum attestatur.*"

Now,

"Who shall decide where Doctors disagree?"

To me it appears that, in all ages, the *most* preposterous falsities have been received as truths by at least the *mens omnium hominum.* As for the *sana mens* — how are we ever to determine what that is?

Justice

What can be more soothing, at once to a man's pride and to his conscience, than the conviction that, in taking vengeance on his enemies for *in*justice done him, he has simply to do them *justice* in return?

Hague

Brown, in his "Amusements," speaks of having transfused the blood of an ass into the veins of an astrological quack — and there can be no doubt that one of Hague's progenitors was the man.

Vox Populi

The *vox populi*, so much talked about to so little purpose, is, possibly, that very *vox et præterea nihil* which the countryman, in Catullus, mistook for a nightingale.

A Typographical Error

In examining trivial details, we are apt to overlook essential generalities. Thus M ——, in making a to-do about the "typographical mistakes" in his book, has permitted the printer to escape a scolding which

he *did* richly deserve — a scolding for a "typographical mistake" of really vital importance — the mistake of having printed the book at all.

Transcendental Diction

It has been well said of the French orator, Dupin, that "he spoke, as nobody else, the language of everybody;" and thus his manner seems to be exactly conversed in that of the Frogpondian Euphuists, who, on account of the familiar tone in which they lisp their *outré* phrases, may be said to speak, as everybody, the language of nobody — that is to say, a language emphatically their own.

De Meyer

Mozart declared, on his death-bed, that he "began to see what *may* be done in music;" and it is to be hoped that De Meyer and the rest of the spasmodists will, eventually, begin to understand what may *not* be done in this particular branch of the Fine Arts.

Sun and Moon

"All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun at noon
Just up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon."

Coleridge.

Is it possible that the poet did not know the apparent diameter of the moon to be greater than that of the sun?

"Camoëns" — Genoa — 1798

Here is an edition, which, so far as microscopical excellence and absolute accuracy of typography are

concerned, might well be prefaced with the phrase of the Koran — "There is *no* error in this book." We cannot call a single inverted *o*, an error — *can* we? But I am really as glad of having found that inverted *o*, as ever was a Columbus or an Archimedes. What, after all, are continents discovered, or silversmiths exposed? Give us a good *o* turned upside-down, and a whole herd of bibliomaniac Arguses overlooking it for years!

French Rhythm

At Ermenonville, there is a striking instance of the Gallic rhythm with which a Frenchman regards the English verse. There Gerardin has the following inscription to the memory of Shenstone: —

"This plain stone
To William Shenstone.
In his writings he displayed
A mind natural;
At Leasowes he laid
Arcadian greens rural."

There are few Parisians, speaking English, who would find anything particularly the matter with this epitaph.

Odors

I believe that odors have an altogether peculiar force, in affecting us through association; a force differing essentially from that of objects addressing the touch, the taste, the sight, or the hearing.

A Report

I cannot say that I ever fairly comprehended the force of the term "*insult*," until I was given to under-

stand, one day, by a member of the "North American Review" clique, that this journal was "not only willing but anxious to render me that justice which had been already rendered me by the *Revue Française* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*" — but was "restrained from so doing" by my "invincible spirit of antagonism." I wish the "North American Review" to express *no* opinion of me whatever — for I have none of it. In the mean time, as I see no motto on its titlepage, let me recommend it one from Sterne's "Letter from France." Here it is: — "As we rode along the valley we saw a herd of asses on the top of one of the mountains — how they viewed and *reviewed* us!"

Stage Effect

Von Raumer says that Enslen, a German optician, conceived the idea of throwing a shadowy figure, by optical means, into the chair of Banquo; and that the thing was readily done. Intense effect was produced; and I do not doubt that an American audience might be electrified by the feat. But our managers not only have no invention of their own, but no energy to avail themselves of that of others.

Carlyle

The next work of Carlyle will be entitled "Bow-Wow," and the titlepage will have a motto from the opening chapter of the Koran: "There is *no* error in this book."

A Distant View

When —— and —— *pavoneggiarsi* about the celebrated personages whom they have "seen" in

their travels, we shall not be far wrong in inferring that these celebrated personages were seen ἑκάς — as Pindar says he "saw" Archilochus, who died ages before the former was born.

Chinese Example

I cannot help thinking that romance-writers, in general, might, now and then, find their account in taking a hint from the Chinese, who, in spite of building their houses downwards, have still sense enough *to begin their books at the end.*

A Rabble

Samuel Butler, of Hudibrastic memory, must have had a prophetic eye to the American Congress when he defined a rabble as — "A congregation or assembly of the States-General — every one being of a several judgment concerning whatever business be under consideration." . . . "They meet only to quarrel," he adds, "and then return home full of satisfaction *and narrative.*"

Monarch and King

I have now before me a book in which the most noticeable thing is the pertinacity with which "Monarch" and "King" are printed with a capital M and a capital K. The author, it seems, has been lately presented at Court. He will employ a small *g* in future, I presume, whenever he is so unlucky as to have to speak of his God.

Moral Courage

With how unaccountable an obstinacy even our best writers persist in talking about "moral courage" — as if there could be any courage that was *not* moral. The adjective is improperly applied to the subject instead of the object. The energy which overcomes fear, whether fear of evil threatening the person or threatening the impersonal circumstances amid which we exist, is, of course, simply a mental energy — is, of course, simply "moral." But, in speaking of "*moral* courage" we *imply* the existence of physical. Quite as reasonable an expression would be that of "bodily thought," or of "muscular imagination."

Fools

I have great faith in fools: — self-confidence my friends will call it: —

> "Si demain, oubliant d'éclore,
> Le jour manquait, eh bien! demain
> Quelque fou trouverait encore
> Un flambeau pour le genre humain."

By the way, what with the new electric light and other matters, De Béranger's idea is not so *very* extravagant.

Man

"He that is born to be a man," says Wieland, in his "Peregrinus Proteus," "neither should nor can be anything nobler, greater, or better than a man." The fact is that, in efforts to soar above our nature, we invariably fall below it. Your reformist demigods are merely devils turned inside out.

Change in Words

Not long ago, to call a man "a great wizard," was to invoke for him fire and fagot; but now, when we wish to run our *protégé* for President, we just dub him "a *little* magician." The fact is that, on account of the curious modern *bouleversement* of old opinion, one cannot be too cautious of *the grounds* on which he lauds a friend or vituperates a foe.

Hegel's Definition of Philosophy

"Philosophy," says Hegel, "is utterly useless and fruitless, and, *for this very reason*, is the sublimest of all pursuits, the most deserving attention, and the most worthy of our zeal." This jargon was suggested, no doubt, by Tertullian's "*Mortuus est Dei filius; credibile est quia ineptum: et sepultus resurrexit; certum est quia impossibile?*"

Anacreon

A clever French writer of "Memoirs" is quite right in saying that "if the *Universities* had been willing to permit it, the disgusting old *débauché* of Teos, with his eternal Batyllis, would long ago have been buried in the darkness of oblivion."

"Life is a Dream"

It is by no means an irrational fancy that, in a future existence, we shall look upon what we think our present existence as a dream.

The Dog's Name

Tell a scoundrel, three or four times a day, that he is the pink of probity, and you make him at least the

perfection of "respectability" in good earnest. On the other hand, accuse an honorable man, too pertinaciously, of being a villain, and you fill him with a perverse ambition to show you that you are not altogether in the wrong.

Standard-Worship

The Romans worshipped their standards; and the Roman standard happened to be an Eagle. Our standard is only one-tenth of an Eagle — a Dollar — but we make all even by adoring it with tenfold devotion.

An Illustration

This reasoning is about as convincing as would be that of a traveller who, going from Maryland to New York without entering Pennsylvania, should advance this feat as an argument against Leibnitz' Law of Continuity — according to which nothing passes from one *state* to another without passing through all the intermediate states.

Curran

How overpowering a style is that of Curran! I use "overpowering" in the sense of the English exquisite. I can imagine nothing more distressing than the extent of his eloquence.

Ability

It is the curse of a certain order of mind, that it can never rest satisfied with the consciousness of its ability to do a thing. Not even is it content with doing it. It must both know and show how it was done.

The Gentleman

Not so: — a gentleman with a pug nose is a contradiction in terms: "Who can live idly and without manual labor, and will bear the port, charge, and *countenance* of a gentleman, he alone should be called master and be taken for a gentleman." — Sir Thomas Smith's *Commonwealth of England.*

The Book of Jonah

Here is something at which I find it impossible not to laugh; and yet I laugh without knowing why. That incongruity is the principle of all non-convulsive laughter is to my mind as clearly demonstrated as any problem in the "Principia Mathematica;" but here I cannot trace the incongruous. It is there, I know. Still I do not see it. In the mean time let me laugh.

Pope

"So violent was the state of parties in England that I was assured by several that the Duke of Marlborough was a coward and Pope a fool." — Voltaire.

Both propositions have since been very seriously entertained, quite independently of all party-feeling. That Pope was a fool, indeed seems to be an established point at present with the Crazyites — what else shall I call them?

"Holofernes"

I never read a personally abusive paragraph in the newspapers, without calling to mind the pertinent query propounded by Goldsmith to Johnson: — "My dear Doctor, what harm does it do a man to call him 'Holofernes'?"

"APPALACHIA"

It is a thousand pities that the puny witticisms of a few professional objectors should have power to prevent, even for a year, the adoption of a name for our country. At present we have, clearly, none. There should be no hesitation about "Appalachia." In the first place, it is distinctive. "America"[1] is not, and can never be made so. *We* may legislate as much as we please, and assume for our country whatever name we think right — but to us it will be no name, to any purpose for which a name is needed, unless we can take it away from the regions which employ it at present. South America is "America," and will insist upon remaining so. In the second place, "Appalachia" is indigenous, springing from one of the most magnificent and distinctive features of the country itself. Thirdly, in employing this word we do honor to the Aborigines, whom, hitherto, we have at all points unmercifully despoiled, assassinated, and dishonored. Fourthly, the name is the suggestion of, perhaps, the most deservedly eminent among all the pioneers of American literature. It is but just that Mr. Irving should name the land for which, in letters, he first established a name. The last, and by far the most truly important consideration of all, however, is the music of "Appalachia" itself; nothing could be more sonorous, more liquid, or of fuller volume, while its length is just sufficient for dignity. How the guttural "Alleghania" could ever have been preferred for a moment is difficult to conceive. I yet hope to find "Appalachia" assumed.

[1] Mr. Field, in a meeting of the New York Historical Society, proposed that we take the name of "America," and bestow "Columbia" upon the continent.

Literary Morality

It is not *proper* (to use a gentle word), nor does it seem courageous, to attack our foe by name, in spirit and in effect, so that all the world shall know whom we mean, while we say to ourselves, "I have not attacked this man by name, in the eye and according to the letter of the law" — yet how often are men, who call themselves gentlemen, guilty of this meanness! We need reform at this point of our literary morality; very sorely too, at another — the system of anonymous reviewing. Not one respectable word can be said in defence of this most unfair — this most despicable and cowardly practice.

The Crab

To vilify a great man is the readiest way in which a little man can himself attain greatness. The Crab might never have become a Constellation but for the courage it evinced in nibbling Hercules on the heel.

The "Blues"

Our "blues" are increasing in number at a great rate; and should be decimated, at the very least. Have we no critic with nerve enough to hang a dozen or two of them, *in terrorem?* He must use a silk cord, of course — as they do in Spain, with all grandees of the *blue* blood — of the "*sangre azul.*"

A Singular Association

No doubt, the association of idea is somewhat singular — but I never can hear a crowd of people sing-

ing and gesticulating, all together, at an Italian opera, without fancying myself at Athens, listening to that particular tragedy by Sophocles, in which he introduces a full chorus of turkeys, who set about bewailing the death of Meleager. It is noticeable in this connection, by the way, that there is not a goose in the world who, in point of sagacity, would not feel itself insulted in being compared with a turkey. The French seem to feel this. In Paris, I am sure, no one would think of saying to Mr. F ——, "What a goose you are!" — "*Quel dindon tu es!*" would be the phrase employed as equivalent.

A Suggestion for Critics

Alas! how many American critics neglect the happy suggestion of M. Timon — "*que le Ministre de L'Instruction Publique doit lui-même savoir parler français.*"

American Letters

It is folly to assert, as some at present are fond of asserting, that the literature of any nation or age was ever injured by plain speaking on the part of the critics. As for American Letters, plain-speaking about *them* is, simply, the one thing needed. They are in a condition of absolute quagmire — a quagmire, to use the words of Victor Hugo, "*d'où on ne peut se tirer par des periphrases — par des quemadmodums et des verumenimveros.*"

Silk Buckingham

"What does a man learn by travelling?" demanded Doctor Johnson, one day, in a great rage — "What

did Lord Charlemont learn in his travels, except that there was a snake in one of the pyramids of Egypt?" — but had Doctor Johnson lived in the days of the Silk Buckinghams, he would have seen that, so far from thinking anything of finding a snake in a pyramid, your traveller would take his oath, at a moment's notice, of having found a pyramid in a snake.

D——D

L—— is busy in attempting to prove that his play was not fairly d——d, that it is only "scotched, not killed;" but if the poor play could speak from the tomb, I fancy it would sing with the opera heroine:

> "The flattering error cease to prove!
> Oh, *let* me be deceased!"

A Linguistic Parallel

"Advancing briskly with a rapier, he *did the business* for him at a blow." — Smollett.

This vulgar colloquialism had its type among the Romans. "*Et ferro subitus grassator, agit rem.*" — Juvenal.

"High-Binders"

As to this last term "high-binder," which is so confidently quoted as modern ("not in use, *certainly*, before 1819") I can refute all that is said by referring to a journal in my own possession — the "Weekly Inspector" for Dec. 27, 1806 — published in New York: —

"On Christmas Eve, a party of banditti, amounting, it is stated, to forty or fifty members of an association, calling themselves 'High-Binders,' assembled in front of St.

Peter's Church, in Barclay Street, expecting that the Catholic ritual would be performed with a degree of pomp and splendor which has usually been omitted in this city. These ceremonies, however, not taking place, the 'High-Binders' manifested great displeasure."

In a subsequent number, the association are called "Hide-Binders." They were Irish.

The Dearth of Genius in America

Perhaps Mr. Barrow is right after all, and the dearth of genius in America *is* owing to the continual teasing of the mosquitoes.

Asides

When I call to mind the preposterous "asides" and soliloquies of the drama among civilized nations, the shifts employed by the Chinese playwrights appear altogether respectable. If a general, on a Pekin or Canton stage, is ordered on an expedition, "he brandishes a whip," says Davis, "or takes in his hand the reins of a bridle, and striding three or four times around a platform, in the midst of a tremendous crash of gongs, drums, and trumpets, finally stops short and tells the audience where he has arrived." It would sometimes puzzle an European stage hero in no little degree to "tell an audience where he has arrived." Most of them seem to have a very imperfect conception of their whereabouts. In the *Mort de Cæsar*, for example, Voltaire makes his populace rush to and fro, exclaiming, "*Courons au Capitole!*" Poor fellows — they are in the capitol all the time; — in his scruples about unity of place, the author has never once let them out of it.

A Conundrum

Talking of conundrums: — Why will a geologist put no faith in the fable of the fox that lost his tail? Because he knows that no animal remains have ever been found in trap.

Wit's Work

Jack Birkenhead, *apud* Bishop Sprat, says that "a great wit's great work is to refuse." The apothegm must be swallowed *cum grano salis.* His greatest work is to originate no matter that shall require refusal.

Scotch Dialect

In the sweet "Lily of Nithsdale," we read —

> "She 's gane to dwell in heaven, my lassie —
> She 's gane to dwell in heaven; —
> 'Ye 're ow're pure,' quo' the voice of God,
> 'For dwelling out o' heaven.' "

The "ow're" and the "o'" of the two last verses should be Anglicized. The Deity at least should be supposed to speak so as to be understood — although I am aware that a folio has been written to demonstrate broad Scotch as the language of Adam and Eve in Paradise.

E Pluribus Unum

The United States motto, *E pluribus unum*, may possibly have a sly allusion to Pythagoras' definition of beauty — the reduction of many into one.

National Lunacy

The Bishop of Durham (Dr. Butler) once asked Dean Tucker whether he did not think that communities went mad *en masse*, now and then, just as individuals, individually. The thing need not have been questioned. Were not the Abderians seized, all at once, with the Euripides lunacy, during which they ran about the streets declaiming the plays of the poet? And now here is the great tweedle-dee tweedle-dum paroxysm — the uproar about Pusey. If England and America are not lunatic now — at this very moment — then I have never seen such a thing as a March hare.

An Author's Face

In a railroad car, I once sat face to face with him — or, rather, *πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον*, as the Septuagint have it; for he had a tooth-ache, and three-fourths of his visage were buried in a red handkerchief. Of what remained visible, an eighth, I thought, represented his "Gayeties," and an eighth his "Gravities." The only author I ever met who looked even the fourth of his own book.

Apothegms

But for the shame of the thing, there are few of the so-called apothegms which would not avow themselves epigrams outright. They have it in common with the fencing-school foils, that we can make no real use of any part of them but the point, while this we can never get fairly at, on account of a little flat profundity-button.

Music

When music affects us to tears, seemingly causeless, we weep *not*, as Gravina supposes, from "excess of pleasure;" but through excess of an impatient, petulant sorrow that, as mere mortals, we are as yet in no condition to banquet upon those supernal ecstasies of which the music affords us merely a suggestive and indefinite glimpse.

The State of Nature

The theorizers on Government, who pretend always to "begin with the beginning," commence with Man in what they call his *natural* state — the savage. What right have they to suppose this his natural state? Man's chief idiosyncrasy being reason, it follows that his savage condition — his condition of action *without* reason — is his *un*natural state. The more he reasons, the nearer he approaches the position to which this chief idiosyncrasy irresistibly impels him; and not until he attains this position with exactitude — not until his reason has exhausted itself for his improvement — not until he has stepped upon the highest pinnacle of civilization — will his *natural* state be ultimately reached, or thoroughly determined.

Literary Animalculæ

Our literature is infested with a swarm of just such little people as this — creatures who succeed in creating for themselves an absolutely positive reputation, by mere dint of the continuity and perpetuality of their appeals to the public — which is permitted, not

for a single instant, to rid itself of these *Epizoæ*, or to get their pretensions out of sight.

We cannot, then, regard the microscopical works of the animalculæ in question, as simple nothings; for they produce, as I say, a positive effect, and no multiplication of zeros will result in unity — but as negative quantities — as less than nothings; since — into — will give +.

Hyperism

Nothing, to the true taste, is so offensive as mere hyperism. In Germany *wohlgeborn* is a loftier title than *edelgeborn*; and, in Greece, the thrice-victorious at the Olympic games could claim a statue of the size of life, while he who had conquered but once was entitled *only* to a colossal.

Chorley

The author speaks of music like a man, and not like a fiddler. This is something — and that he has imagination is more. But the philosophy of music is beyond his depth; and of its physics he, unquestionably, has no conception. By the way — of all the so-called scientific musicians, how many may we suppose cognizant of the acoustic facts and mathematical deductions? To be sure, my acquaintance with eminent composers is quite limited — but I have never met *one* who did not stare and say "yes," "no," "hum!" "ha!" "eh?" when I mentioned the mechanism of the *Sirène*, or made allusion to the oval vibrations at right angles.

Euphemism

In general, we should not be over-scrupulous about niceties of phrase, when the matter in hand is a dunce to be gibbeted. Speak out! — or the person may not understand you. He is to be hung? Then hang him by all means; but make no bow when you mean no obeisance, and eschew the droll delicacy of the Clown in the Play — "Be so good, sir, as to rise and be put to death."

This is the only true principle among men. Where the gentler sex is concerned, there seems but one course for the critic — speak if you can commend — be silent, if not; for a woman will never be brought to admit a non-identity between herself and her book, and "a well-bred man" says, justly, that excellent old English moralist, James Puckle, in his "Gray Cap for a Green Head," "a well-bred man will never *give himself the liberty* to speak ill of women."

Paine's "Age of Reason"

It is the half-profound, half-silly, and wholly irrational composition of a very clever, very ignorant, and laughably impudent fellow — "*ingeniosus puer, sed insignis nebulo*," as the Jesuits have well described Crébillon.

Birth

The sense of high birth is a moral force whose value the democrats, albeit compact of mathematics, are never in condition to calculate. "*Pour savoir ce qu'est Dieu*," says the Baron de Bielfeld, "*il faut être Dieu même.*"

Learning

I have seen many computations respecting the greatest amount of erudition attainable by an individual in his lifetime; but these computations are falsely based, and fall infinitely beneath the truth. It is true that, in general, we retain, we remember to available purpose, scarcely one-hundredth part of what we read; yet there are minds which not only retain all receipts, but keep them at compound interest forever. Again: — were every man supposed to read *out*, he could read, of course, very little, even in half a century; for, in such case, each individual word must be dwelt upon in some degree. But, in reading to ourselves, at the ordinary rate of what is called "light reading," we scarcely touch one word in ten. And, even physically considered, knowledge breeds knowledge, as gold gold; for he who reads really much, finds his capacity to read increase in geometrical ratio. The *helluo librorum* will but glance at the page which detains the ordinary reader some minutes; and the difference in the absolute reading (its uses considered), will be in favor of the *helluo*, who will have winnowed the matter of which the tyro mumbled both the seeds and the chaff. A deep-rooted and strictly continuous habit of reading will, with certain classes of intellect, result in an instinctive and seemingly magnetic appreciation of a thing written; and now the student reads by pages just as other men by words. Long years to come, with a careful analysis of the mental process, may even render this species of appreciation a common thing. It may be taught in the schools of our descendants of the tenth or twentieth generation. It may become the method of the mob of the eleventh or

twenty-first. And should these matters come to pass — as they will — there will be in them no more legitimate cause for wonder than there is, to-day, in the marvel that, syllable by syllable, men comprehend what, letter by letter, I now trace upon this page.

Is it not a law that need has a tendency to engender the thing needed?

Gibbon

"The nature of the soil may indicate the countries most exposed to these formidable concussions, since they are caused by subterraneous fires, and such fires are kindled by the union and fermentation of iron and sulphur. But their times and effects appear to lie beyond the reach of human curiosity, and the philosopher will discreetly abstain from the prediction of earthquakes, till he has counted the drops of water that silently filtrate on the inflammable mineral, and measured the caverns which increase by resistance the explosion of the imprisoned air. Without assigning the cause, history will distinguish the period in which these calamitous events have been rare or frequent, and will observe, that this fever of the earth raged with uncommon violence during the reign of Justinian. Each year is marked by the repetition of earthquakes, of such duration that Constantinople has been shaken above forty days: of such extent that the shock has been communicated to the whole surface of the globe, or at least of the Roman Empire."

These sentences may be regarded as a full synopsis of the *style* of Gibbon — a style which has been more frequently commended than almost any other in the world.

He had three hobbies which he rode to the death (stuffed puppets as they were), and which he kept in condition by the continual sacrifice of all that is val-

uable in language. These hobbies were *Dignity — Modulation — Laconism.*

Dignity is all very well; and history demands it for its general tone; but the being everlastingly on stilts is not only troublesome and awkward, but dangerous. He who falls *en homme ordinaire* — from the mere slipping of his feet — is usually an object of sympathy; but all men tumble now and then, and this tumbling from high sticks is sure to provoke laughter.

His modulation, however, is always ridiculous; for it is so uniform, so continuous, and so jauntily kept up, that we almost fancy the writer waltzing to his words.

With him, to speak lucidly was a far less merit than to speak smoothly and curtly. There is a way in which, through the nature of language itself, we may often save a few words by talking backwards; and this is, therefore, a favorite practice with Gibbon. Observe the sentence commencing — "The nature of the soil." The thought expressed could scarcely be more condensed in expression; but, for the sake of this condensation, he renders the idea difficult of comprehension, by subverting the natural order of a simple proposition and placing a deduction before that from which it is deduced. An ordinary man would have thus written: "As these formidable concussions arise from subterranean fires kindled by the union and fermentation of iron and sulphur, we may judge of the degree in which any region is exposed to earthquake by the presence or absence of these minerals." My sentence has forty words — that of Gibbon thirty-six; but the first cannot fail of being instantly comprehended, while the latter it may be necessary to re-read.

The mere *terseness* of this historian is, however, grossly over-rated. In general, he conveys an idea (although darkly) in fewer words than others of his time; but a habit of straight thinking that rejects non-essentials, will enable any one to say, for example, what was intended above, *both* more briefly and more distinctly. He must abandon, of course, "formidable concussions" and things of that kind.

E. g. — "The sulphur and iron of any region express its liability to earthquake; their fermentation being its cause."

Here are seventeen words in place of the thirty-six; and these seventeen convey the full force of all that it was necessary to say. Such concision is, nevertheless, an error, and, so far as respects the true object of concision, is a *bull*. The most truly concise style is that which most rapidly transmits the sense. What, then, should be said of the concision of Carlyle? — that those are mad who admire a brevity which squanders our time for the purpose of economizing our printing-ink and paper.

Observe, now, the passage above quoted, commencing — "Each year is marked." What is it the historian wishes to say? Not, certainly, that every year was marked by earthquakes that shook Constantinople forty days, and extended to all regions of the earth! — yet this only is the legitimate interpretation. The earthquakes are said to be "of *such* duration that Constantinople," etc., and these earthquakes (of *such* duration) were experienced every year. But this is a pure Gibbonism — an original one; no man ever so rodomontaded before. He means to say merely that the earthquakes were of unusual duration and extent — the duration of one being so long that

Constantinople shook for forty days, and the extent of another being so wide as to include the whole empire of Rome — "by which," he adds *sotto voce* — "by which insulated facts the reader may estimate that *average* duration and extent of which I speak" — a thing the reader will find it difficult to do.

A few years hence — and should any one compose a mock heroic in the manner of the "Decline and Fall," the poem will be torn to pieces by the critics, *instanter*, as an unwarrantable exaggeration of the principles of the burlesque.

Veracity

It is a deeply consequential error this: — the assumption that we, being men, will in general, be *deliberately* true. The greater amount of truth is impulsively uttered; thus the greater amount is spoken, not written. But, in examining the historic material, we leave these considerations out of sight. We dote upon records, which, in the main, lie; while we discard the *Kabbala*, which, properly interpreted, do *not*.

Light and Sound

"The right angle of light's incidence produces a sound upon one of the Egyptian pyramids."

This assertion, thus expressed, I have encountered somewhere — probably in one of the Notes to Apollonius. It is nonsense, I suppose, — but it will not do to speak hastily.

The orange ray of the spectrum and the buzz of the gnat (which never rises above the second A), affect me with nearly similar sensations. In hearing

the gnat, I perceive the color. In perceiving the color, I seem to hear the gnat.

Here the vibrations of the tympanum caused by the wings of the fly, may, from within, induce abnormal vibrations of the retina, similar to those which the orange ray induces, normally, from without. By *similar*, I do not mean of equal rapidity — this would be folly; — but each millionth undulation, for example, of the retina, might accord with one of the tympanum; and I doubt whether this would not be sufficient for the effect.

How to Begin

How many good books suffer neglect through the inefficiency of their beginnings! It is far better that we commence irregularly — immethodically — than that we fail to arrest attention; but the two points, method and pungency, may always be combined. At all risks, let there be a few vivid sentences *imprimis*, by way of the electric bell to the telegraph.

Chirography

I am far more than half serious in all that I have ever said about manuscript, as affording indication of character.

The general proposition is unquestionable — that the mental qualities will have *a tendency* to impress the manuscript. The difficulty lies in the comparison of this tendency, as a mathematical *force*, with the forces of the various disturbing influences of mere circumstance. But — given a man's purely physical biography, with his manuscript, and the moral biography may be deduced.

The actual practical extent to which these ideas are applicable, is not sufficiently understood. For my own part, I by no means shrink from acknowledging that I act, hourly, upon estimates of character derived from chirography. The estimates, however, upon which I *depend*, are chiefly negative. For example; a man may not always be a man of genius, or a man of taste, or a man of firmness, or a man of any other quality, because he writes this hand or that; but then there are manuscripts which no man of firmness, or of taste, or of genius, ever did, will, or can write.

There is a certain species of hand-writing,— and a quite "elegant" one it is, too; although I hesitate to describe it, because it is written by some two or three thousand of my personal friends, — a species of hand-writing, I say, which seems to appertain, as if by prescriptive right, to the blockhead, and which has been employed by every donkey since the days of Cadmus, — has been penned by every gander since first a gray goose yielded a pen.

Now, were any one to write me a letter in this manuscript, requiring me to involve myself with its inditer in any enterprise of moment and of risk, it would be only on the score of the commonest civility that I would condescend to send him a reply.

The Apparent Size of the Sun

Dr. Lardner thus explains the apparent difference in size between the setting and the noonday sun: —

"Various solutions have been proposed, and the one generally adopted by scientific minds I will now endeavor to make plain, though I fear its nature is so remarkable that I am not sure I shall make it intelligible. But here it is. If the sun, or another celestial object, be near the

horizon, and I direct my attention to it, I see between me and that object a vast number of objects upon the face of the earth, as trees, houses, mountains, the magnitudes and positions of which are familiar to me. These supply the mind with a means of estimating the size of the object at which I am looking. I know that it is much farther off than these; and yet the sun appears, perhaps, much larger than the top of the intervening mountain. I thus compare the sun, by a process of the mind so subtle and instinctive that I am unconscious of it, with the objects which I see between it and myself, and I conclude that it is much larger than those. Well, the same sun rises to the meridian; then there are no intervening objects whereby to space off the distance, as it were, and thus form a comparative estimate of its size. . . . I am prepared to be met by the objection, that this is *an extremely learned and metaphysical reason. So it is.*"

How funny are the ideas which some persons entertain about learning, and especially about metaphysics!

Whatever may be the *faible* of Dr. Lardner's intellect, its *forte* is certainly not originality; and however ill *put* are his explanations of the phenomenon in question, he is to be blamed for them only inasmuch as he adopted them, without examination, from others. The same thing is said, very nearly in the same way, by all who have previously touched the subject. And the reasoning is not only of very partial force, but wretchedly urged. If the sun appears larger than usual merely because we compare its size with mountains and other large objects upon the earth (objects, the Doctor might have said, *beyond* all which we see the sun), how happens it that the illusion does not cease when we see the orb setting where no such objects are visible? for example, on the horizon of a smooth sea.

We appreciate *time* by events alone. For this rea-

son we define time (somewhat improperly) as the succession of events; but the fact itself — that events are our sole means of appreciating time — tends to the engendering of the erroneous idea that events *are* time — that the more numerous the events, the longer the time; and the converse. This erroneous idea there can be no doubt that we should absolutely entertain in all cases, but for our practical means of correcting the impression — such as clocks, and the movements of the heavenly bodies — whose revolutions, after all, we only *assume* to be regular.

Space is precisely analogous with time. By objects alone we estimate space; and we might as rationally define it "the succession of objects," as time "the succession of events." But, as before. — The fact that we have no other means of estimating space than objects afford us tends to the false idea that objects *are* space — that the more numerous the objects the greater the space; and the converse; and this erroneous impression we should receive in all cases, but for our practical means of correcting it — such as yard measures, and other conventional measures, which resolve themselves, ultimately, into certain natural standards, such as barley-corns, which, after all, we only *assume* to be regular.

The mind can form *some* conception of the distance (however vast) between the sun and Uranus, because there are ten objects which (mentally) intervene — the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Ceres, Vesta, Juno, Pallas, Jupiter, and Saturn. These objects serve as stepping-stones to the mind; which, nevertheless, is utterly lost in the attempt at establishing a notion of the interval between Uranus and Sirius; *lost* — yet, clearly, not on account of the mere *dis-*

tance (for why should we not conceive the abstract idea of the distance, two miles, as readily as that of the distance, one?) but, simply, because between Uranus and Sirius we happen to know that all is void. And, from what I have already said, it follows that this vacuity — this want of intervening points — will cause *to fall short* of the truth any notion we shall endeavor to form. In fact, having once passed the limits of absolutely practical admeasurement, by means of intervening objects, our ideas of distances are *one;* they have no variation. Thus, in truth, we think of the interval between Uranus and Sirius precisely as of that between Saturn and Uranus, or of that between any one planet and its immediate neighbor. We fancy, indeed, that we form different conceptions of the different intervals; but we mistake the mathematical knowledge of the fact of the interval, for an idea of the interval itself.

It is the principle for which I contend that instinctively leads the artist, in painting what he technically calls distances, to introduce a succession of objects between the " distance " and the foreground. Here it will be said that the intention is the perspective comparison of *the size* of the objects. Several men, for example, are painted, one beyond the other, and it is the diminution of apparent size by which the idea of distance is conveyed; — this, I say, will be asserted. But here is mere confusion of the two notions of abstract and comparative distance. By this process of diminishing figures, we are, it is true, made to feel that one is at a *greater* distance than the other; but the idea we thence glean of abstract distance, is gleaned altogether from the mere succession of the figures, independently of magnitude. To prove this,

let the men be painted out, and *rocks* put in their stead. A rock may be of any size. The farthest may be, for all we know, really, and not merely optically, the least. The effect of absolute distance will remain untouched, and the sole result will be confusion of idea respecting the comparative distances from rock to rock. But the thing is clear: if the artist's intention is really, as supposed, to convey the notion of great distance by perspective comparison of the *size* of men at different intervals, we must, at least, grant that he puts himself to unnecessary trouble in the multiplication of his men. *Two* would answer all the purposes of two thousand; — one in the foreground as a standard, and one in the background, of a size corresponding with the artist's conception of the distance.

In looking at the setting sun in a mountainous region, or with a city between the eye and the orb, we see it of a certain seeming magnitude, and we do not perceive that this seeming magnitude varies when we look at the same sun setting on the horizon of the ocean. In either case we have a chain of objects by which to appreciate a certain distance; — in the former case this chain is formed of mountains and towers — in the latter, of ripples, or specks of foam; but the result does not present any difference. In each case we get the same idea of the distance, and consequently of the size. This size we have in our mind when we look at the sun in his meridian place; but this distance we have *not* — for no objects intervene. That is to say, the distance falls short, while the size remains. The consequence is, that, to accord with the diminished distance, the mind instantaneously diminishes the size. The conversed experiment gives, of course, a conversed result.

Dr. Lardner's "so it is" is amusing, to say no more. In general, the mere natural philosophers have the same exaggerated notions of the perplexity of metaphysics. And, perhaps, it is this *looming* of the latter science which has brought about the vulgar derivation of its name from the supposed superiority to physics — as if μετὰ φυσικά had the force of *super physicam*. The fact is, that Aristotle's "Treatise on Morals" is next in succession to his book on "Physics," and this he supposes the rational order of study. His "Ethics," therefore, commence with the words Μετὰ τὰ φυσικά — whence we take the word, Metaphysics.

That Leibnitz, who was fond of interweaving even his mathematical with ethical speculations, making a medley rather to be wondered at than understood — that *he* made no attempt at amending the common explanation of the difference in the sun's apparent size — this, perhaps, is more really a matter for marvel than that Dr. Lardner should look upon the common explanation as only too "learned" and too "metaphysical" for an audience in Yankee-Land.

Truth and Fiction

That "truth is stranger than fiction" is an adage forever in the mouth of the uninformed, who quote it as they would quote any other proposition which to them seemed paradoxical — for the mere point of the paradox. People who read never quote the saying, because sheer truisms are never worth quoting. A friend of mine once read me a long poem on the planet Saturn. He was a man of genius, but his lines were a failure of course, since the realities of the planet, detailed in the most prosaic language, put

to shame and quite overwhelm all the accessory fancies of the poet.

If, however, the solemn adage in question should ever stand in need of support, here is a book will support it.[1]

"The Bride of Fort Edward"

Some richly imaginative thoughts, skilfully expressed, might be culled from this poem, which, as a whole, is nothing worth. E. g. —

> "And I can hear the click of that old gate,
> As once again, amid the chirping yard,
> *I see the summer rooms open and dark.*"

and —

> "— How calm the night moves on! and yet,
> *In the dark morrow that behind those hills*
> *Lies sleeping now, who knows what horror lurks?* "

Realism

The defenders of this pitiable stuff uphold it on the ground of its truthfulness. Taking the thesis into question, this truthfulness is the one overwhelming defect. An original idea that — to laud the accuracy with which the stone is hurled that knocks us in the head. A little less accuracy might have left us more brains. And here are critics absolutely commending the truthfulness with which only the disagreeable is conveyed! In my view, if an artist must paint decayed cheeses, his merit will lie in their looking as little like decayed cheeses as possible.

[1] "Ramaseand; or a Vocabulary of the peculiar language used by the Thugs, with an Introduction and Appendix descriptive of the System pursued by that Fraternity, and of the Measures adopted by the Supreme Government of India for its Suppression." — Calcutta, 1836.

NOTES

NOTES

ON NOVELS, ESSAYS, AND TRAVELS

COOPER'S "Wyandotte." Published in "Graham's Magazine," November, 1843.

Hawthorne's "Tales." I. Published in "Godey's Lady's Book," November, 1847. II. Published in "Graham's Magazine," May, 1842. III. Published in "Godey's Lady's Book," November, 1847.

Dickens's "Barnaby Rudge." Published in "Graham's Magazine," February, 1842. The earlier prospective review of this novel, referred to in the text, was published in the Philadelphia "Saturday Evening Post," May 1, 1841.

Lever's "Charles O'Malley." Published in "Graham's Magazine," March, 1842.

Marryatt's "Joseph Rushbrook." Published in "Graham's Magazine," September, 1841.

Bird's "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow" and "Sheppara Lee." I. Published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," December, 1835; II. The same, September, 1836. The papers were much longer in the magazine, owing to the fact that the story of each novel was narrated in detail.

Simms's "The Wigwam and the Cabin." Published in "Godey's Lady's Book," January, 1846.

Henry Cockton's "Stanley Thorn." Published in "Graham's Magazine," January, 1842.

"*Peter Snook.*" Published in the "Broadway Journal," i. 23. This paper, except the opening paragraphs, pp. 102–104, was originally published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," October, 1836.

Walsh's "Didactics." Published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," May, 1836.

Macaulay's "Essays." Published in "Graham's Magazine," June, 1841.

Edwin Percy Whipple and other Critics. Published in "Graham's Magazine," January, 1850.

Headley's "The Sacred Mountains." Published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," October, 1850.

Stephens's "Arabia Petræa." Published in the "New York Review," October, 1837. The paper is made up, in the main, of paraphrase of the work under review and of Keith on the Prophecies, of the sort illustrated in the NOTES, Vol. V. The passage of Hebrew criticism pp. 159–161, was furnished by Dr. Anthon, and is printed verbatim from a letter of Anthon to Poe in the Griswold papers, still unpublished. Poe used it repeatedly.

Irving's "Astoria." Published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," January, 1837. The paper is largely paraphrased from the work under review.

MARGINALIA

The fragments, excerpts, and annotations, gathered by Poe under this or similar titles, were published in the "American Museum," Jan., Feb., 1839; "Democratic Review," Nov., Dec., 1844, April, 1846; "Godey's Lady's Book," Aug., Sept., 1845; "Graham's Magazine," March, Nov., Dec., 1846, Jan.–March, 1848; "Southern Literary Messenger," April, 1846; April–July, 1849. In several instances the paragraphs were republications, sometimes

revised, of matter previously used in early reviews. To these Griswold added, under the same title, short reviews and fragments of reviews selected by himself, apparently, from Poe's minor writings in the magazines with which he had been editorially connected. The passages thus gathered, and their sources, are as follows: —

Brougham, Gr. March, 1842.
Plagiarism, "Hymn for Christmas," B. G. M. Dec. 1839.
Antigone, Gr. Dec. 1840.
Southey's "Doctor," S. L. M. July, 1836.
Simms's "Damsel of Darien," B. G. M. Nov. 1839.
Bulwer, "We have long learned," S. L. M. Feb. 1836.
Dickens, Gr. May, 1841.
James, S. L. M. Oct. 1836.
Hood, B. J. ii. 5.
Wilson, B. J. ii. 9.
Marvell, S. L. M. Aug. 1836.
Petrarch, Gr. Sept. 1841.
Paulding's "Washington," S. L. M. May, 1836.
Newnham's "Human Magnetism," B. J. i. 13 (revised).
Defoe, S. L. M. Jan. 1836.
Antique Poetry, S. L. M. Aug. 1836.
Analogies, Gr. May, 1841.
Malibran, B. G. M. June, 1840.

The passage entitled "Byron" has not been found in its original issue.

The Editors have omitted from the "Marginalia," first, all passages printed elsewhere in the critical writings; secondly, all passages from "Pinakidia" (see NOTE II. Vol. IV.); thirdly, remarks on obscure authors and books, and other matter of like ephemeral nature.

G. E. W.

END OF VOL. VII.

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